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Pamphlets in defence of the Oxford usage of subscription to the XXXIX articles at matriculation

Oxford 1835

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Pamphlets

PAMPHLETS

IN DEFENCE OF

THE OXFORD USAGE

OF

SUBSCRIPTION TO THE XXXIX ARTICLES

AT

MATRICULATION.

OXFORD,
J. H. PARKER:
J. G. AND F. RIVINGTON, LONDON.
1835.

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The Papers which compose the following Collection, proceeding as they do from individuals variously circumstanced, writing quite independently of each other, present, perhaps, altogether as fair a view as could be given of the ground taken by the advocates of Subscription in the late discussion at Oxford. This same circumstance, their independent origin, will of course in some instances lead to apparent repetition when the volume is read through; the argument of one person necessarily touching on, or running into, the argument of another. But this inconvenience, it is hoped, will seem pardonable, in consideration of the extreme importance of the subject, and the possibility (to say the least) of its being again agitated; although it might seem that so very decided an expression of the sense of the University as has lately taken place ought to preclude such agitation, at least in our own time. In any case, however, it may be well to have the reasons and principles on which we have now been acting put in as enduring a form as possible. And it seems desirable that those on either side, who have been influenced in their votes chiefly by views of present expediency, should have their calm attention recalled to the use and necessity of Subscription, considered in itself: on which

head may be consulted more especially the two pamphlets, entitled respectively, " Subscription no Bondage," and " Self Protection."

It may not be irrelevant in this place to take some brief notice of one or two of those objections which have been most lately advanced, or are otherwise most in vogue, not so much against Subscription itself, as against the mode of argument adopted by its defenders.

1. We are charged with assuming a false historical premiss. A fallacy, it is stated, runs through the current defences of Subscription, in that they assume the original object of that practice to have been the increase of piety and sound religion. Whereas it is evident (so they affirm) from history, that the only purpose of those who introduced the practice in the days of Queen Elizabeth was to keep out Papists.

Now, as a matter of fact, it is conceived that this statement is answered by the quotations from Wood in the first note at the end of " Subscription no Bondage," or in p. 33. of the Questions, &c. by a Bachelor of Divinity. Supposing, however, such evidence were wanting in the particular case, surely the general characters of Lord Burleigh and Bishop Whitgift, at that time the constant advisers of the Crown in all Academical as well as Ecclesiastical matters, afford some presumption of the higher purpose being intended. It appears from Strype, Ann. t. iii. b. i. c. 5. that Lord Burleigh was in that

very year employed in regulating Oxford matters, and there is no reason at all to doubt that so grave an enactment must have had his consideration and approval. And he was a person whose policy in his own University, Cambridge, led him always to think of instruction rather than exclusion. After all, though the fact were granted, what is the objection to our present purpose? It is not a wise man's part to pull down his fence, because it was originally intended against spoilers coming in a different direction from those who now threaten him; provided, as a fence, it be still sound and effectual. And if in addition it give warmth and shelter, and cherish valuable fruits of all kinds, surely there is no harm in letting it stand, and making the most of its benefit, even though no evil were to be apprehended from any external quarter at all. Take the method of Subscription at the worst: let it have been a contrivance of Leicester, the most unworthy of all Chancellors, to serve some bye end of his own. Is it not the very essence of Christian policy to turn things invented by the world to Christian purposes? If this be wrong, what are we to think of our Reformation? depending as it did on aid borrowed from Henry VIII. and the courtiers of King Edward.

2. We are charged, again, with having invented a theory of Subscription to the Articles on grounds of implicit faith and submission to the Church, which theory, it is affirmed, was never heard of till

the cry for alteration made itself heard. It is said, "You got up your explanation for the occasion, and now you have persuaded yourselves of its correctness." To this objection, as far as many individuals are concerned, statements like the following (and many such might be produced) appears to give a sufficient answer. A Non-Resident M.A. having received a copy of the "Questions by a Bachelor of Divinity," wrote thus in answer to his friend and former Tutor. "*I remember as well as if it were yesterday, the account you gave me of my Signature to the Articles when you took me to the Vice-Chancellor for Matriculation: and it was in substance, I might almost say in words, the same as what I read in the Queries now forwarded to me.*" This may be sufficient as a justification from the charge of disingenuously contriving a theory in defence of a practice to which we were at all events bigotted. Here however, as before, though it were granted that the explanation were to the minds of its defenders new, what hinders but that it might be substantially true and sound? Might not the fault or error lie in those who had failed to perceive it before, and not so much in the explanation itself? Surely, if such *were* the case, it would only be parallel with what happens in almost all great practical questions, relating to established institutions. Take, for example, the question of Church property. It is attacked, and its defenders take the obvious ground of its involving the safety of

all property: which is a true and valid ground, no doubt: but what if they should find hereafter, on more consideration of Scripture and Church principles, as delivered (*e. g.*) by such writers as Hooker, that Church plunder is not only *robbery*, but *sacrilege*, and that it is sure to draw down a curse on those committing it? ought persons making such a discovery to be precluded from arguing on it because either themselves or others had not perceived it sooner? No more ought the true principle of Subscription to be slighted (supposing it to be the true principle) because, through men's inadvertence, or through their low and temporizing notions, it may have been long kept out of sight. But thus it is in all such matters. One generation of those who hold the truth is content, for some temporary purpose, to acquiesce in modes of maintaining it comparatively quite mean and inadequate. Another follows in the same groove: and so by degrees the old and high views of things come to be forgotten, and their revivers are looked upon at best as ingenious dreamers. No doubt, one merciful purpose of the moral storms which are now abroad in the world, is to make it impossible for Churchmen to go on for ever in this way.

But to return to the question of Subscription. The only satisfactory way for the aggressive party must be to shew directly that the signature of the Articles has done of itself, and not incidentally, more harm to us than it has done good. Cases in which

it has been remembered afterwards with misgiving, and has so far caused pain, prove nothing, except it be the want of wisdom or kindness in teaching a young man that *assent upon understanding*, not *implicit faith*, ought to have been the ground of his signature. But as to the mere giving of pain, many no doubt have been pained at something which has come across them on repeating the Creed; many again in reading the Scriptures; many in going over their baptismal vows.

Before we consent to the required change, it must be proved, and not surmised only, that Subscription has nothing to do with forming and maintaining in Oxford the *Genius Loci:* that peculiar spirit and temper which the world calls bigotted, but which Churchmen will of course try by the rules of the Church, and not by those of the world; and having done so, will give it, perhaps, a different name. It must be proved, not surmised only, that Subscription had nothing to do with the glories of the seventeenth century; with the Oxford Reasons against the Covenant; or with the resistance to Latitudinarian notions in the beginning of the following century; or with the stand made last year against direct heretical intrusion; or (chiefest of all) with the success hitherto vouchsafed to the Church of England, as compared with other Protestant Churches, in resisting the taint of Arian and Socinian blasphemy.

Until this has been done, we must continue to

be, seriously and in earnest, defenders of Subscription; and being in earnest, we must of course exert ourselves; and exerting ourselves, we must bear the blame of feverish anxiety, of exciting needless suspicions and alarms; and being blamed, we must persist in the same course; assured, that the day cannot be far distant, when those who were most active in the present attack, will be foremost to thank us for having been instrumental in its failure.

May 26, 1835.

The compilers of the following Pamphlets wish to state, that they have obtained permission from their several authors to publish them in this collected form; each writer remaining, of course, responsible for his own production, but not for the form of the whole. They have omitted other pamphlets, not as in any way disapproving of them when rightly understood, but because they contained very grave charges against an individual, in which some of the writers of those included in the collection did not feel themselves called upon even to appear to join.

☞ On the late proposal in Convocation to substitute Subscription to a Declaration for Subscription to the Articles at Matriculation, 57 voted in favour of the measure, 459 against it.

Of Residents, (exclusive of Heads of Houses,) 29 voted for it, and 110 against it. At least 11 more were prevented voting in the majority from accidental circumstances. Among Residents are included those only who are strictly residing in Oxford, exclusive of many who live in the immediate vicinity, and vote upon any occasion of moment.

CONTENTS.

SELF-PROTECTION.

THE CASE

OF

THE ARTICLES.

BY CLERICUS.

Quisnam igitur liber? sapiens, sibi qui *imperiosus*.

OXFORD.

SOLD BY J. H. PARKER.

1835.

SELF-PROTECTION.

WE stand at a very critical moment to the history and destinies of Oxford. We are on the eve of being divided on a question, unparallelled in interest for very many generations. There is no saying what might be the issue of the proposed improvement, if carried. Perhaps it might be the era of a new order of things. Perhaps it might conciliate whole legions of those unfriendly to us. Perhaps its liberality, its disinterestedness, might subdue animosity with the same winning power which was to attend the working (for instance) of the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill; whose good effects, in deference to the many kind-hearted persons who recommended it, we still patiently wait for. Perhaps, on the contrary, its working might be like that of every single step in the great march of which it forms a part. Perhaps it might not be a splendid exception, but in a year or two we might be looking back, and discovering, in hopeless remorse, that it took its place very easily and naturally in the tide of things, which we ought to have rolled back, or to have fallen in the attempt.

To any member of our body who desires to substitute a Declaration for Subscription to the Articles at Matriculation, two questions are here proposed :—

I. What is the *real* benefit which you yourself receive from your connexion with the Articles,—what lies on the surface of your own mind, and suggests itself as the *natural* reason for your being attached to them?

II. Is this benefit *less* necessary to a youth of eighteen, than it is now to you?

I. What is the real benefit which you have received from the Articles?

Is it that you have had your tongue tied on certain debatable points, and pledge yourself by the act of Subscription to steer clear of the angry ground of controversy?

Or is it, that some degree of peace and quiet is secured among Theologians, by their having a referee at hand, an arbiter useless in their better and happier times, but waiting to be dragged in to keep the peace in a case of extremity?

Or is it rather, the benefit of SELF-PROTECTION; protection of self against self; protection for your proper self against the thousand extravagant fancies which will run away with you if they can?

If the theory of self-protection needs explanation or analysis, it is as follows:—

If a naturalist is generalizing his observations and constructing a theory, any given case or specimen which falls into his hands presents a number of phenomena, some essential, some accidental to it; but the accidental just as palpable as the other, just as obvious to the view, just as loudly claiming to be taken into account, and to be rated as the central and essential facts of the case. Against this delusion he requires some protection or other; wherever he finds it, whether in the multiplication of experiments, so as to ascertain which phenomena are vital and characteristic, and which drop away and disappear as his induction proceeds; or whether he be guided by his experience of similar processes, and have acquired a readiness in detecting the important features of a case, and discarding the accidents; wherever he find the protection, he must have it, or by the very nature of the supposition he is at the mercy of delusion on every side.—This is the account of the protection afforded by a *Theory*.

Just so in the formation of our religious view. Here, our natural and proper materials, are the declarations of Scripture. These declarations are all equally the Divine word. And yet in one page the Socinian supposes that he finds his doctrines; in the next, the Antinomian; simply (I suppose) because each of them fails to take his stand in the *centre* of the ground he is examining.

One finds himself near the circumference on one side, and from that point takes his perspective view; another is just as far from the centre as the former, but unfortunately on a different side; but he too must have a compact plan within his sight. Each forms his sketch; and each anathematizes his neighbour. Is it not a natural account to give of such a case, that each party wanted something to steady him, something to lean upon, a want which would be most exactly supplied (next to the direct voice of inspiration) by having the voice, the solemnly expressed voice of his collective Church to refer to for guidance.

But now let it be observed, that the case of the Student of the Bible differs from the former, the case of the Naturalist, in this important particular. The Naturalist has little of positive inducement to take up a wrong view; he may go off with some error in his mind, from having been too eager to grasp the principle of his subject; he may rest upon too scanty an induction; but there will seldom, if ever, be any cause at work which can make him positively disinclined to accept that which is the true account; which can lead him to snatch at one fact rather than another as the material and ground of his theory. But in the formation of a religious view, the case is widely different. One page of Scripture specially recommends itself to one frame of mind, another to another; and this it does, just in such degree as that frame of mind is partial, and *fails of being*

the right, the candid, the modest frame. One man is cold-hearted and proud; he finds regularity of conduct easier than faith. Another is of a different mould, and finds it more congenial to him to dwell on the texts which seem to subordinate the deeds of the law. This variety has no limit; no two minds are alike; and once more let it be observed, that to each mind, viewed in regard, not to its catholic interest in divine truth, but to its specific difference, the view which it takes of Scripture recommends itself just so far as it fails of being the *whole* counsel of God.

Now it is here contended, first, that the natural and proper protection to each man against this besetting evil in his own mind, is found in just such a guide, as the Articles of the Church present; and secondly, that the proper working of such a guide is attained only so far as we can give it a place *within* the mind, and make it a part of the mind; and that this, the proper benefit, suggests, as the most natural course, that adoption and personal appropriation of the Articles which is represented by Subscription.

And one quality of the Articles, which has secured to them our reverence and affection, and has made them so closely and intimately precious to our personal recollection, is this; that they make no pretensions to unity of view. They do not profess to exhibit the Divine counsels in a compact outline; on the contrary, their particular value is, as a protest against the sundry unsound

attempts which have been made at comprehensions of doctrine. It is a plain and simple truth, but unspeakably important to be remembered, that "Imagination is the author of all error."* There never was a wrong view adopted, but this was the history of it; that the imagination stepped forward and filled up an outline too soon, before the mind had data enough. As long then as man possesses this faculty; as long as error has a charter of perpetuated existence within us, depending, not on a present stock of prejudice, but on an ever salient principle of the mind; so long it must be of the last importance to set up in the mind an antagonist power, ready to raise its warning voice against extravagance, either on this side or on that; and the point chiefly insisted upon in these pages is, that we should plant this standard of protection as close as we can to the fountain of the evil; approximating it as nearly as human nature and human means will admit, to the condition of an *idea* of the mind.

Another very interesting quality of the Articles is their *historical* bearing. Once bear in mind that no doctrinal statement was ever put forth by the Church, until heresy or schism had clamoured loudly for it, and demanded the curb, and the whole subject has a new colour. At once the Articles are seen as beacons scattered over a dangerous coast, a coast which the perversity of human mind and human will has invested with dan-

* Butler, Anal. Part 1. Ch. i.

ger. If we could decline exploring the coast at all, the case would be different; but so long as it continues true, that religious knowledge is the one great interest of us all; so long as it continues a certain condition of our being that the mind, just as it is cultivated and refined and nurtured into activity, will work on religious truth, and infallibly realize to itself *some* image or other of religious doctrines;—lastly, so long as the mind of man is what it has been for six thousand years, morbidly prone, from a thousand causes, to realize wrong images; so long we hold it an inestimable privilege to a student, to come and profit by the dearly bought experience of others, of sects and schools, of generations and centuries; to have pointed out to him the quicksands which have been found the points of special danger to minds just like his own; of danger, even to the making shipwreck of their faith. As long as ecclesiastical history contains a record of afflicting impieties, one sect denying—all that Arius denied; another making the grossest impurities indifferent,* because the earthly body only acted; another making them meritorious,† and the qualification for Gospel benefits, continuing in sin that grace might abound; so long we must watch over ourselves with a godly jealousy, and remember that what man has done, man can do. And let it be repeated, that the way to ex-

* Mosheim, Cent. i. part 2. chap. v. §. 7.

† Mosheim, Cent. ii. part 2. chap. v. §. 14.

clude the vicious view, is to pre-occupy the ground with the healthy one; and this benefit is attained by any member of the Christian family, just so far, and so far only, as he has this protecting guardian ready to help him, not in his book, but in his mind; not standing prepared to offer him a suggestion if it occur to him to turn aside and solicit it; but rather living within him as his view, his idea, his form of thought.

As the best and the only satisfactory comment on this theory, I would ask any person who has at all a thoughtful habit of mind, and has enjoyed the benefit of being early thrown into the position of close personal allegiance to our Articles;—What is the real benefit which you have derived from this position? And I shall so far take it for granted that men's minds are alike, as confidently to go on to these queries; have you not found in the Collection of Articles, a Friend who stood by, ready to help you with a monitory look when you needed it; not contradicting you, but merely throwing you back on yourself for a moment; giving you, what you were not going to give yourself, time to *think;* giving you a hint, that there was more in the matter than you saw, that the question was not new, that the very ground had been traversed by others, by the great in intellect and venerable in piety, and those too the natural guides—yes, if there is any meaning in the words,—the natural and constitutional guides of your train of thought, and that they had found, besides the view which

now caught your eye and captivated you with its compactness, another side which forbade them to rest in your view as the whole truth? Do you remember moments when your thought rambled off, not by solicitation, but of itself, prompted, you knew not how, by a text, a hint, a metaphor, an illustration, and you found some Scriptural Mystery slip into shape before your view, and wondered that theologians for some two thousand years could have wrangled about any thing so simple? It was a critical moment; there were two paths opening before you; one, to follow out your thought, urged on by the thousand subtle encouragements of pride and vanity, of conscious originality and intellectual triumph; to follow it out till your every thought was pledged to it, and it was too hard for flesh and blood to give it up,* because in fact, as far as *your* knowledge went, the balance of arguments was in favour of it;—this was the one course. The other was, to turn from the nascent idea, which rose so invitingly in the mind, to put it aside when it looked most ingenious and brilliant, and recommended itself to all your parental tenderness. But how could you do so, what was at hand to turn you that way? every

* "O merciful God, what man's wit is there able to sound the depth of those dangerous and fearful evils, whereunto our weak and impotent nature is inclinable to sink itself, rather than to shew an acknowledgement of error in that which once we have unadvisedly taken upon us to defend, against the stream, as it were, of a contrary public resolution."—HOOKER, E. P. Pref. §. 8.

imaginable impulse was on the other side. If you have been preserved in an orthodox path, is it not (humanly speaking) attributable to this, that you found yourself born into the inheritance of a place in a system; a frame which, when you struck off on this side or on that, just touched you, and made you suspect something wrong.—Or take it in another way. In reading ecclesiastical history, did you never meet yourself in the person of some heretical theory; did you never find that some fancy, some train from which you were happily called off in time, had been anticipated by some school of Illuminati, then sifted, and canvassed, and argued out by the Theology of all Christendom, and the result, in one elaborated sentence, bequeathed as a landmark for you? Have you not been amazed to discover that the map of heresy was a map of your own mind, that in one corner of it you were a Legalist, in another an Antinomian, in a third—but I will not shock you with any worse exposures; these are things not to be breathed out of our closet, or to any human ear. Only, if there be any truth in all this, I infer, that you cannot rate too highly the blessing which I conceive Divine Providence to have raised up in the Church, a *governing power;* to which it is essential that it be, in one sense, *out of ourselves;** i. e. not, in its exercise, subject to those distracting impulses which it is its office to control and direct; in another sense, *within* our-

* Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France.

selves; i. e. determining, or rather constituting the shape of our minds in relation to the subject in hand; asking, therefore, of the wise and temperate, not to unsettle it in its hold on the minds of men, but rather to contribute to their loyal and cordial appropriation of it.

Surely there is nothing unreasonable in this. Suppose a man to have worked his way with toil, and danger of his life, through a vast morass; suppose that, on his passage, he had seen others sink away to irretrievable ruin; suppose it were the necessary condition of his being, to continue moving about in the very regions of danger; suppose he had sons who, with their offspring to the end of time were, by the very necessity of the case, to continue in the same circumstances; there would be nothing tyrannical in his first setting up marks of caution, and then endeavouring to work into the very constitution of their minds a settled dread of the points of danger, a settled attachment to the defined track of safety. And the more he could reduce this attachment to the character of an instinct, a personal idea, the better would his end be gained.

Now, if there be any reason in this, let it be particularly observed, (with reference to a popular objection,) that it all goes upon the supposition that they *do not know* the ground. The father has known more than he desired; he desires now to protect his sons if he can. The Church has been dragged over the thorny ground of contro-

versy; she has acted, she has suffered; she has struggled, and wept; she has stood in the gap, and bled for the faith; she has been militant here, and wears even yet the scars of conflict; she has been in perils from the heathen, in perils among false brethren; in weariness, and painfulness. This is her experience; and she would now save her sons from the same, if she can, and if they will be saved. She comes to them without disguise, confessedly supposing that they do not know the ground. If they did, her cautions would be a mockery. Let them go on knowing more and more; the more they know, the less they are dependent on her warnings; but her cautions are significant and precious to her sons, just so far as they do not know.

The truth is, that the objection here alluded to is one which every person sets aside with the greatest ease in his own daily practice. I mean, that every one, both on common occasions, and in the most solemn frames of mind, expresses without scruple that which is not his real sentiment, provided only he *wishes* it to become so.—First, on common occasions. Witness the forms of civility; the phraseology of a letter; of which it has been well observed,* that they must have been originally adopted from a real impression of their fitness; and that the use of them which is found necessary in social life, is a standing rebuke which each man carries about with him, contrast-

* Bp. Butler, Serm. Jan. 30.

ing what he should be, and the law he shall finally be tried by, with what he is; and of the same forms it may be observed, in passing, that they correspond often to the letter with those salutations which the Primitive Christians expressed from the heart.—And secondly, in our most solemn frames of mind. Our Liturgy is formed on this principle from beginning to end. We put into the mouth of a whole congregation, including every shade of mind, of religious and irreligious condition, the fullest professions of pious feeling. We lead a body of persons, which must often comprise the proud, the confident, the self-righteous, to plead before their Maker, as something known to Him, their faith,* their contrition,† their self-distrust,‡ their hearty desire to pray.§ And let it be allowed to add, that He who taught us to pray, bade *all* kneel and say, as from our hearts, Thy will be done.

II. It remains to be considered how far the account which has been offered, of the mental benefit derived from Subscription to the Articles, applies to the case of a young man at the common age for Matriculation.

Perhaps this question may be best answered by another. As no one, with the Bible in his

* Te Deum fin.

† Psalm li. 3. (One of the opening sentences.) Observe also the Collect for the 12th Sunday after Trinity.

‡ Collect for Sexages. Sunday.

§ Collect for the 3d Sunday after Trinity.

hands, would ever have thought of putting forth Articles if he could have avoided it, as they are wholly relative to an evil in our nature, from which they would endeavour to protect us, we go on to ask, at what age is the evil most rife? The question all but answers itself. And here again I would confidently appeal to the personal recollections of any experienced and thoughtful man, who has watched his own mind, to say, whether it is not so; whether it is not just in the first years of manhood, that the guide is wanted.—Look at the picture. The mind, just the most eager to snatch at a completed view; the fancy, just the most ready to fill up the picture, and offer that view; the historical knowledge, which supplies the one great argument for cherishing a doctrinal standard, necessarily very limited; the other great argument, the heretical tendency of every mind, necessarily unobserved, by one who scarcely knows, as yet, what way heresy lies; and very reluctantly owned, when it does exhibit itself, by one who has a hundred inducements to explain it away, a hundred more agreeable accounts to offer of any striking and original thought. Just at the period of these accumulated disadvantages, the Church Articles present themselves, furnishing what I do not hesitate to call a natural remedy for a natural evil, ready to give the best protection against the crude view, by pre-occupying its very place with one profoundly considered.

Under these circumstances, those among us

who cherish the present practice, who have trembled under the responsibilities devolved upon them by the care of a number of minds at such an age, in such a rank of life, and at such a menacing crisis of national history, may entreat a few moments serious attention to the following considerations:—

The great problem of this place, as a place of education, is to combine the maximum of regularity of conduct, with the minimum of external constraint. In other words, the great problem is, to find means of getting *within* the conscience of the pupil, and there setting up some self-acting tribunal. While, then, we hear complaints, though not just or plausible, nor indeed frequent, considering our numbers and the difficulty of our situation, still while we hear complaints of the deficiencies of our discipline; while in one corner of the country a father is weeping over a ruined son, whose extravagance has hampered him, and whose acquired vices cut him to the heart; while in another, the traducer of our Church fixes on some unhappy specimen, and points a scornful finger at our training for the ministry, our "schools of the prophets;" in such a time, what infatuation is it in our friends, what insidious cruelty in those unfriendly to us, to raise the clamour, to attempt to cripple our hands in this vital corner of our living body, this citadel of our moral strength. There are some among us who are well-nigh weighed down at times with the so-

lemnity of their trust; there are some who are in Holy Orders, and have not forgotten their ordination vow; and who could in no way reconcile themselves to the life of a tutor, but by esteeming their office strictly pastoral. Such men desire to watch, as those who must give account, and could never rest in any thing short of the greatest possible degree of vigilant observation of their pupils' moral and religious career. They feel that by *pledging the conscience* of the pupil at the outset, and attempting to enforce on their own minds and on his, the nature of the obligations rising out of the pledge, they have some hold upon him; while the slightest sacrifice, the slightest retirement from this ground, must simultaneously be followed up by a more than corresponding increase of personal surveillance. Words cannot express the reluctance that would be felt to make this move. To be compelled to tighten the rein, to freeze up the warmth of personal confidence, to retrograde one step into the heartless protection of a rigid espionage over the pupil's orthodoxy, is a change which not a few would look at with the keenest distress. Not to mention the miserable feebleness of such a system of inspection; and can you conceive any thing more afflicting to a tutor, than to be living with a suspicion, that there was an undercurrent at work, that some acute and seductive reasoner among his pupils was poisoning minds around him, and doing what a life would scarcely be long enough to undo?

Against this he has now some protection, and that not slight; he sends the bark afloat, not out of his sight indeed, but afloat, and that not without confidence, because he knows that it carries a steadying weight within it; and this he vastly prefers to a continued attempt, very fatiguing, and very precarious at the best, to steady it by a long arm from the shore.

If it be argued that this good has not been realized, I answer, that in saying so we are only proclaiming our shame; when agitation shall have done its work, and the minds of us all shall have been awakened to the real, the weighty import of the act of Subscription; when every one of us shall have done all that man can do to place the subject in its proper colours and its due interest before the mind of each who subscribes, when through a competent length of time, the machinery shall have been fairly tried on its own ground, and not judged of by the remiss use of it, then it will be time enough to pronounce it inefficient. Do not (to follow up the figure) discard the ballast, because you find that you have not hitherto made the most of it.

If I were conversing with one of those for whose benefit the system exists, I should speak much in the same way. I would say, above all do not be determined to feel yourself a slave; do not be restless in your armour, and then persuade yourself that its sounds are the rattling of a fetter. Do not insist upon it that trammels are imposed

on you from without. Nothing so servile. Those who legislate for you do not impose one thread on you which they have not first laid on themselves. Do not say, they will not trust you to think for yourself; say rather, they do not trust themselves. They read the sorrowful stories of past times; they dare not trust themselves, and they entreat you, as you value all that is precious, not to trust yourself. You think the position uneasy, and humiliating. They grant it all, for they feel it all. The Church, with her sons, is doing penance for past extravagances. Just as the deflexions were great, must her self-restriction now be rigid. Do you only watch your own mind, and see that you do not contribute to that evil which made the self-discipline necessary. If you are perplexed, and ask, Is not all this very bad? I answer, most certainly; it is a very bad story from beginning to end. It is somewhat humbling to talk about it, but if you wish it, it runs thus; some six thousand years ago, he who was the representative of our whole race, was placed in happiness and innocence, with a plain rule to guide him, pronouncing what should be the consequence of disobedience. This was very simple; but he trusted himself to think; and we know the sequel.—In process of time One came down for our deliverance, concerning whom it was revealed to us that He was the Divine Being, and yet very Man; we were told that he was so, but we were not told how; a sufficient intimation, perhaps, to

a right mind that it was neither necessary nor possible for us to understand it: but no; we would trust ourselves to think; and we know what was the issue.—We were told that under this dispensation the Divine hand was all in all; yet that each of us was to work out his own salvation; a condition, not in the least embarrassing in practice; but in speculation, a mystery dark as night. The Divine Goodness would have set us to believe and to act; but we set ourselves to think; and we know what followed.—Do not then look at half the case, and so judge. Be not so peremptory with yourself. Do not spring to an abstract principle to prescribe for a complex case. Rather be sure that its abstract perfection is its practical defect. Look at what has been, and fear. Look at the acute, the learned, taking a hasty step, then carried down the easy descent, till all was lost. Look at this, and think well before you say that you can afford to fling away any tried and valued instrument of SELF-PROTECTION. If they who so made shipwreck of their faith could rise up and speak, I believe that they would give to you and me some very striking views of the true theory of moral and intellectual freedom. I believe they would say of it, as a wise man said of civil liberty, that it was "a severe and restrained thing." I believe they would tell you that you were born a slave, and that the problem of life was, how to get free. They might remind you of the promise that "the truth should make you free." And I think they would leave

you convinced, that to start with a sentence of orthodoxy *within* you, gathered, as you would not yet be qualified to gather it, from remote sources, from all the corners of Scripture, and from the ocean of history, was not to drag a chain, but to carry with you a charter of liberty.

And now, as the whole question is one of alternative, and a choice of evils, let us imagine the change carried, and the proposed Declaration adopted.—Is it not certain, that there is something in the wording of the Declaration less unbending than the simple act of Subscription, more tempting to men of elastic consciences to suggest to themselves shades of interpretation; shades which shall differ one from another by indefinitely small steps, but which, in their most accommodating varieties, shall present an opening to the most miserable evasions, having nothing in common with the manly and bonâ fide declaration of Unity which we contemplate? Can we not look forward a few months, and see the whole scene, different explanations floating about—this satisfying one man, and that another? If there is any one who sees no reason to expect such an issue, I would entreat him to turn his eyes to a stage, where, at this very moment, the very same drama is acting; think of the Roman Catholic oath in the House of Commons. Surely, if it is of the Wisdom which rules us all, to bring good out of evil, surely that tragedy is allowed to be acted before our eyes, to guide our steps at this very moment.

Observe, however, one striking difference in the two cases. The Member of Parliament comes into his place, knowing his ground. An Undergraduate (in the proposed plan) would find it the very notion of his position, that on entering he did not know his ground. The first word which the University addressed to him was, to remind him, that he was pledged to no Article he was not then familiar with. Take a strong case; take one youth, ingenious, and of undisciplined mind. He enters with a cursory knowledge, or none at all; the second Article, for instance, has not had much of his study. In a week or two he is much enlightened by some views that have occurred to him, and why should not he think for himself? Thrown into society, he discusses freely—I will not follow him. I will only say,—to one in Holy Orders, for instance,—what would be your feelings if you saw your pupil in this case, and conscience told you that your suffrage had helped to bring him there.

One word, in conclusion, on a topic by which many are influenced, some avowedly, and many more unconsciously—the notion of a clamour from without. I mention it, not without a feeling of shame; the truth is, such an argument ought never to be breathed among us. The question should be settled on grounds which are altogether out of sight of such a thought. For is it not the very notion of our place in the body politic and in the history of the world, that we live on as a principle of resistance to that very pressure when it arises? When the people ima-

gine a vain thing, where are they to hear their rebuke, if not from our cloister? Shall there be one sacred corner, where the fearless truth is spoken still, or shall the whole head be sick, the whole heart faint?—Imagine yourself in being, three centuries hence; from that point cast your eye back, and see the tide of feeling—call it what you will, it is dreadful enough to him who views it by the light of Truth, of that temper which he learns to pray for in himself—look at the tide of feeling for the last few generations; see it roll, slow and sullen, like an army of locusts, across Europe; strain your thought to find that one spot in the world where it ought to have met its rebuke, to have heard one unflinching word for the Good Cause,—"And if I perish, I perish!" Find that spot if you can; and if you discern it aright, I do not believe that you will think Providence intended *you* in this day to yield to the "pressure from without." No; rather, if I see a place standing as Oxford now stands, the great battle just reaching to her gates, good men looking to her from all corners of the land, to strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees—a place with such recollections of the past, such moral power now, such an account to render to posterity; I would address her in words like those which were addressed to the Jewish queen of Persia; which gave fire to her sinking courage, and saved the people of God:—

"Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed; AND WHO KNOWETH WHETHER THOU ART COME TO THE KINGDOM FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS."

KING, PRINTER, ST. CLEMENT'S, OXFORD.

SUBSCRIPTION NO BONDAGE.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

SUBSCRIPTION NO BONDAGE,

OR THE

PRACTICAL ADVANTAGES

AFFORDED BY

THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

AS

GUIDES

IN

ALL THE BRANCHES

OF

ACADEMICAL EDUCATION.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

ON

THE DECLARATION

WHICH IT IS PROPOSED TO SUBSTITUTE FOR SUBSCRIPTION TO THE ARTICLES AT MATRICULATION.

By RUSTICUS.

Another error is, that, after the distribution of particular arts and sciences, men have abandoned Universality or *Philosophia prima*, which cannot but cease and stop all progression. For no perfect discovery can be made on a flat or a level. Neither is it possible to discover the more remote or deeper parts of any science, if you stand upon the level of the same science, and ascend not to a higher science. *Bacon.---Advancement of Learning.*

OXFORD,
J. H. PARKER:
RIVINGTON, LONDON: AND DEIGHTON, CAMBRIDGE.
1835.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THIS Pamphlet was drawn up at your request, and it is now submitted to your approbation.

The notion that Subscription to Articles is imposed on students entering the University of Oxford as *a help to education* and not as *a test of faith*, has, I doubt not, occurred to many besides myself. It has been my endeavour,

First, to prove that this opinion is rational in itself, consistent with the views of those who drew up the Articles and introduced them into our Universities, and is justified by the analogy of the other cases in which assent to them is demanded.

Secondly, to shew, what precise purpose they are intended to effect in education—that in all Schools and Universities there is a contract expressed or implied between the teacher and learner, as to the principles on which the one agrees to teach and the other to learn—and that to state the terms of this contract is at once the most honest method, and the most serviceable to education.

Thirdly, to shew, that, if the terms or rules of study which a University imposes on its pupils are to be of any practical value in explaining to them the

course of general education upon which they are entering—in connecting the different branches of it with each other—or in removing perplexities which naturally arise in each—they must be drawn from the Science of Theology.

Fourthly, to shew, that by means of this principle we are enabled to answer several popular objections to our system, and even to convert them into arguments in its favour.

The whole Pamphlet was written before I had heard of the Declaration, which it is proposed to substitute for Subscription. I have nothing to say respecting the *purpose* of that Declaration, which I have not said already in the following pages; nothing respecting its particular *form*, which has not been urged much better than I could urge it by other objectors. If the principle, which I have asserted, be a true one, the new form of admission must be far more gratuitously offensive to the Dissenters than that which it supersedes. They cannot understand why a body constituted for purposes of general education should impose a confession of faith on its members. *My* answer is, our Articles are not enforced as a confession of faith, they are imposed for the sake of our general studies; and were they removed, our education would lose its meaning, its manliness, its coherency. The supporters of the *Declaration* can offer no answer to the complaint, they are imposing a direct test which means exclusion, and can mean nothing else.

But the advocates of the Declaration, I perceive,

rest their hopes far less on its intrinsic merit, than upon the alleged confusions and contradictions among the advocates of Subscription. Each one of you, they say, has a different notion of its meaning; how is it possible, then, that we can explain it to the world? I should be loth to add any force to this objection by offering an opinion on Subscription different from that of many who contend for it, if I did not feel sure, that what has ingeniously been converted into an argument for instant change, will strike sober persons as the strongest reason for remaining quiet. If there is so much confusion on this subject even in the minds of considerate persons, why call upon them to legislate? Any measure, which is the fruit of such a state of mind, is likely to be a subject of speedy but too late repentance. This point is most candidly and strongly put by Mr. Sewell. "We seem to be placed," he says, "in a new position, and to require for our guidance many peculiar views, which have for some time been partially lost sight of, because they did not bear directly on our practice. Perhaps nothing but much discussion, with all its accompaniments of tedious enquiry and varieties of opinion, will enable us just at present to see our way fairly before us." Surely this statement is most sound and reasonable. The supporters of the Declaration do not deny that Subscription means something. The character of those who introduced it, the time which it has lasted, even the multitude of plausible notions respecting its purpose, are presumptions to this extent, which they cannot

rebut. As happens commonly in the like cases, custom has made us thoughtless about the purpose of the act, till at last it has nearly escaped us. If this is a reason for abolishing the practice, any practice which is so good as to become habitual through a long course of years must suffer the same fate.

With respect to the assertion, that it is impossible to make the meaning of Subscription intelligible to persons without the University, it is the same which is every day urged as a reason for casting away portions of our Liturgy; "They may, perhaps, have a very good sense to you or me, but they must mislead the people." The experience of many who are living among humble and ignorant persons is the best answer to it. They can testify, that while they suffered loose and vague notions respecting these passages to remain in their own minds, they were indeed utterly incapable of interpreting them to others; but, after diligent and humble meditation, what had been perplexed became so simple to their own minds, that they could expound it to the poorest rustic, and seemed to them so much an organic part of the service of form, to which it belonged, that the whole would lose its meaning and life, if it were taken away.

I cannot doubt that the true idea of Subscription, whatever it be, would commend itself just as readily to the least gifted student or the dullest English parent. If, for instance, I should have succeeded in developing that true idea, would any

plain citizen or country gentleman be greatly perplexed by being told, that these Articles contain the terms, according to which the teacher agrees to teach and the learner to learn, just as the memorandum previous to a deed of conveyance contains the terms upon which a seller agrees to sell, and a purchaser to purchase.

You will, I fear, observe proofs of hasty writing in these sheets; for the thoughts I have no such apology to offer. The subject was forced upon my attention more than ten years before it became one of popular discussion, and owing to various circumstances it has been impossible for me to dismiss it from my mind since. I do not mention this in order to get credit for my statements, which must stand or fall by their own merits, but merely as an excuse for entering on a controversy, in which much abler persons are already engaged.

I ought, however, to add, that these sheets have not been written with any hope of influencing Members of Parliament or the ruling persons in the University, but with the far humbler object of leading some of the younger students into a more correct appreciation of their advantages, and a more quiet and thankful use of them. This is a pleasure to which a very insignificant person may aspire. If it is granted to me, I trust I shall feel humble gratitude for it, and it will be much enhanced by knowing, that you and other kind friends heartily sympathize in it.

I am, very faithfully, yours,

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

SUBSCRIPTION NO BONDAGE,

&c.

THE University of Oxford requires, that every student at Matriculation shall subscribe to Thirty-nine Articles. According to the common notion, this Subscription is demanded as a test of the student's conformity to the Church of England. Lord Brougham, in one of the speeches which he delivered during the last Session, took this notion for granted, and contended, that Oxford had compassed that object by a circuitous and oppressive process, which Cambridge had attained by a simple declaration. If his Lordship's premises were correct, I do not see how it would be possible to evade his conclusions.

But there are two objections to that premiss. The first is, that Oxford has a security for her Students' allegiance to the Church of England, which is at least equivalent to any verbal declaration. She requires them all to participate in the acts and ordinances of the Church. The imposition of Articles, therefore, for this object would be superfluous. The second is, that Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles is *not* a proof of conformity to the Church of England. To be a member of the Church of England, is to be in com-

munion with the Church of England; the phrases are convertible. But the Church of England has not imposed these Articles upon her communicants. She does not require that her communicants should even have read them. She has one formulary, the Apostles' Creed, which she expects every baptized child to learn, and every attendant upon her services to utter[a]. This Creed is generically different from the Thirty-nine Articles, as different as the Oath of Allegiance is from the Act of Settlement. I could easily shew, and I purpose hereafter to shew at some length, that it is directly contrary to the principle of the Church of England, as much contrary to her principle as it is in accordance with the principles of most who dissent from her, to impose any terms whatever upon her communicants, except that acknowledgment of their union to a common head, which is implied in the very fact of their meeting together, and expressed in the Apostles' Creed. It is enough at present to insist upon this point, that the Church of England does not recognize the Thirty-nine Articles as terms of admission into her fellowship. And, since the terms of admission to a society or corporation must, of course, be the same for all its members; since the opposite notion is not merely an unjust illiberal notion, (like a law for the rich and a law for the poor,) but an impossible notion, a self-contradiction; these Articles, not being terms for the whole body of communicants, cannot be terms for that portion of them which dwell in the University of Oxford.

[a] "....Therefore I shall rehearse to you the Articles of our Faith, that you may know whether you believe as a Christian man should or no." *Order for the Visitation of the Sick.*

But if these Articles are not imposed for this purpose, why are they imposed? One would suppose, from some notion, right or wrong, that they will be helps in education. If we had never heard any other reason, this would have seemed the most natural. The other is clearly an after-thought. It *might* have been a more correct explanation, though more far fetched. But, if it be proved not correct, we may surely recur to the more obvious one, and enquire what advantage our ancestors expected from these Articles in University education, and whether the expectation was a reasonable or a foolish one.

I may, however, be encountered by some opposition before I can enter upon these questions. I may be told, that these Articles bear upon their front the character of a Confession of Faith; that they are not as like any other compositions as they are like those which men allow to deserve this name; that, whatever other uses I imagine for them, those, who compiled them, obviously intended them as a Confession of Faith; that they would not be imposed upon the Ministers of the English Church at Ordination, if they were any thing else. I will take these points in their order.

Does not the internal evidence of the Articles favour the notion of their being a Confession of Faith, and exclude the notion of their being any thing else?

No one will deny that the Articles are a set of precisely worded, authoritative propositions; nor that they take cognizance of various philosophical and theological notions; nor that they are, to a very great extent, occupied in denouncing certain notions as *not* true. In some of these particulars they may resemble the Confessions of Faith in use among

foreign Churches; in all they are different from that Confession of Faith, the use of which in our own Church was approved and ratified by the compilers of these Articles. That Confession is entirely positive, and entirely personal. Its formula is "I believe," and not "A is B," "C is not D." It refers wholly to persons, and their acts. It takes no notice of by-gone or current opinions. It objects to nothing. Place these two documents before an unprejudiced sensible man, and I apprehend he will say without hesitation, "The subject matter of these two compositions is evidently the same; in form and kind, and, therefore, in their objects, they are altogether different."

But is there any other work extant of which he could say, This more nearly resembles the Thirty-nine Articles than they resemble the Apostles' Creed? I believe there is. I believe that, if Bacon's Novum Organum were put before such a person as I have imagined, he would say decisively, "In the subject matter these two compositions are evidently different; in form and kind, and therefore, I should suppose, in the objects for which they were framed, they are alike. In each I find a set of dictatorial propositions intended to warn students against certain alleged superstitions, which, as the authors believed or feigned to believe, had a tendency to frustrate the pursuit of knowledge and the attainment of truth in the departments of human thought, in which they respectively interested themselves." This would be his verdict. It is perfectly compatible with such an opinion that he should think the Novum Organum the wisest, and the Thirty-nine Articles the most foolish set of propositions ever drawn up. But I have supposed the arbitrator to possess such a share of logic and common sense, that

his judgment upon the *genus* of a composition would not be in the least affected by his estimate of its merits.

But, secondly, have we not reason to suppose that those who drew up the Articles meant them to be a Confession of Faith, and nothing else? A few plain considerations will answer the question. These Articles, as every one knows, were framed at the Reformation. They at least were no part of those old forms which, we are told, the Reformers wanted courage or power to sweep away. They are the inventions, the innovations of that intellectual age. Wherever Protestantism prevailed, logical propositions prevailed likewise. In those countries which vaunted a pure exclusive Protestantism they soon prevailed to the banishment of all ancient forms and symbols. As far as the early continental reformers are concerned, this result was owing to necessity rather than taste. Calvin did not despise the Confessions of the early Church: Knox, his pupil, spake the Apostles' Creed aloud on his death-bed. Luther, the *man* of the Reformation, the brave, hearty, home-bred Luther clave to these ancient forms with no half affection. He declared that they contained the pith and marrow of Divinity; other men might be more profound, but, for his part, he averred that he never got beyond this child's learning. It was, therefore, not the fault of the German Reformers, nor wholly of the Helvetians, that the intellectual confessions, to which the intellectual war of the Reformation gave birth, ultimately superseded the spiritual formularies, which bind the members of the Church, to day, in holy fellowship with Augustine, Hilary, Athanasius, nay, with Polycarp and Ignatius. But the position of the Continental

Reformers was militant. Every week, almost, they were obliged to answer some papal manifesto, disclaim some ignorant defender, rescue themselves from Anabaptist coopération, or bring out the deepening shades of doctrine which distinguished them from each other. Their peculiar gift was intellectual vigour and subtlety; their circumstances almost compelled them to exalt that gift above those other still more precious gifts, which they shared in common with humbler Christians. The predominance which they gave to the intellect over the heart may easily be explained and pardoned; but many a Swiss and German patriot may wish that his forgiveness could blot out the effects which it has produced upon the moral and political condition of his countrymen! *Our* Reformers did *not* aim at establishing a pure and exclusive Protestantism. They believed with Martin Luther, who had fought the beast in the closest arena, who had felt every one of its claws at his heart, and who hated it with the most perfect hatred, that the old Prayers are not Popish, but are the most powerful antidotes against Popery. They believed that the deadly sin of Popery had been, that it corrupted these prayers, and hid them from the understanding of the people. They believed, that to restore them to their primitive form, and give them to the people for their daily bread, was the noblest work of Reformation which they could achieve. For they thought, that, in order to educate a people, in order to lead them on from that implicit faith, in which all knowledge begins, to that actual faith, which alone is knowledge, you must not address yourself to that judging faculty, which is granted in various measures, and to some scarcely at all, but to that heart and conscience, which are the common

inheritance of all: and this, even for the sake of that faculty, and that it may receive the highest cultivation of which it is capable. Here then was another point in which they differed from the continental Reformers. To confute adversaries, was the great vocation of the one; to educate the people, of the other. Here too was a point, in which they differed from their successors, who *perfected* the English Reformation in the next age. The Westminster Assembly prosecuted the objects of Cranmer and Latimer by the methods of Calvin and Zwingle. They endeavoured to instruct the people, the poor, the halt, the maimed, women, and children, by logical definitions. Our Reformers did not attempt this: but was their logic and subtlety therefore wasted? Because they loved and honoured old Latimer as a very prince among them, did they count all wit, which was less homely and popular than his, as useless? By no means. They did not swerve from their great object; but in order to accomplish that object, various expedients were necessary. The people were to be educated; but who should educate them? The people were to be delivered from superstitions; who were to deliver them? First, the Ministers of the people; these they believed were the commissioned educators, liberators of mankind. Secondly, in cooperation with these, professional men and the higher class, generally. But how are they to be fitted for their task? What certainty have we that they will escape the infection of the disease which they are to cure? *Quis custodiet ipsos Custodes?* Popery appealed to the heart and the senses, but it appealed also to the understanding. It could converse as easily, as familiarly, as plausibly with doctors as with ploughmen. How likely is it that they who are to set

men free from the iron chains of the world, will come forth themselves bound hand and foot with the cobweb fetters of the schools! This danger must be provided against, and the Reformers drew up these Articles as a provision against it. The remedy may have been clumsy, ineffectual, worse than the disease; that is not the point about which I am now contending. I am merely concerned to maintain that this was their object. My readers will judge whether the facts of the case, thus briefly collected, do make it probable that I am right; and the more these facts are meditated upon and the more fresh facts are sought for, the more confident shall I be of their verdict. But if this were the intention of the Reformers, then it will follow, that these Articles were not first devised for some ecclesiastical purpose, and afterwards introduced into the Universities in order to further that purpose; but that they were primarily intended for instruments of education, and were adopted by the University, because it was a body instituted to educate young men, and for no other reason whatever[a].

But, thirdly, Why then are these Articles subscribed by Ministers of the Church of England at ordination? My answer to this question may be, in part, guessed from the remarks under the last head. One thing I will assert boldly. They who hold Articles to be terms of communion, have never been able to shew any cause why either the Church or the State should have chosen to impose a different Confession upon

[a] That the Articles were in the first instance introduced into the University with a view to promote sound education, and not as a test of Churchmembership, appears from the facts recorded by Antony à Wood. See Note at the end.

the ministers of the Church from that which is required of the people. Archdeacon Blackburne and the writers of the Confessional, in all their arguments and their declamation against the impolicy and injustice of the imposition, have never grappled with this point. They never appear once to have asked themselves, If these Articles be intended as a Confession of Faith, how comes it to pass that the lay members of our congregation are not as much taxed with them as we are? It is in vain to take refuge in the plea, that the State has a hold upon the Clergy, its workmen, which it has not upon the ordinary communicant. We admit that the State has a hold upon them. We admit that our subscribing the Articles at ordination is an incident of the alliance between Church and State. But when you have got that concession, you are not a whit the better for it. You cannot shew why upon your supposition the State has any interest in enforcing Subscription to these particular Articles more than to any other imaginable document. Whereas, upon my view of the case, the explanation is easy, and in accordance, I think, with all the circumstances of the time in which these propositions were composed, and began to be used amongst us.

The period of the Reformation is spoken of as the period of the Church's resurrection to its true and proper life. But it was surely quite as much a period of *national* resurrection. Each nation which felt the shock first communicated to Luther, awoke to a consciousness of its being a nation. Englishmen felt that they were Englishmen, Germans that they were Germans, no longer mere portions of the Popedom, but endued with a distinct life, a precious gift of God, which for his honour they were bound to defend

against all who aimed at universal sovereignty, whether they were Bishops of Rome, or Emperors of Germany. All the writings of this period shew us how that sense of personal distinctness, which was in fact the grand practical feeling developed by the Reformation, was connected with the sense of national distinctness. Then first did kings, set free from subjection to a visible ruler, become conscious that they were not merely the first chieftains of the aristocracy, but that they had a distinct power committed to them by God himself, upon the preservation of which, the coherency of all the national relations depends. Such a consciousness was nearly sure at first to produce tyrannical claims. It was not wonderful that there should be a Henry to assert a divine *right*, before there was an Edward and an Elizabeth to acknowledge a divine *trust*. When that was once acknowledged by the head of the system, a sense of responsibility was communicated to the members of it. The *State* began to understand itself, and to feel that it had vast duties to discharge, the neglect of which would leave it rebellious, cowardly, impracticable subjects.

The people must be educated, and the government must provide for their education. Now, if there were in the country at that time a body recently liberated, like the State, from a visible tyranny, and asserting that it had received power and commission from an invisible head, to perform that task, which the State felt it needful to undertake, but to which it felt that no strength belonging to it was adequate; if that body was found to be making good its claims by putting forth a mighty influence over the minds and spirits of men; if each believed the other to be appointed ministers of God, for different though concurrent tasks; if

the representatives of the State believed that its existence was not really upheld by fleets and armies, but by the recognition of a Spiritual Authority superior to itself; if the representatives of the Church believed that it was no contradiction for those who held the higher dignity to be the servants of those who held the lower; (for that this contradiction of a lord becoming a servant, was the very means of asserting his lordship, and the key to all the harmonies of Christianity; and for that they could not so mightily assert the grandeur of a spiritual agency, as by shewing that all civil powers were necessarily helpless without it;) if the representatives of the Church believed further, that they could not refuse their cooperation to the State, without denying that the State was bound to the performance of that duty, to which it believed itself bound, or else denying that the Ministers of the Gospel were the most efficient agents for performing that duty; if, in consequence of these observations, that union, which had always existed between these two bodies, (though during the Papal period under confused and often changing conditions; and with a perpetual alternation of civil and ecclesiastical subserviency, an accident which they observed also in the States which had adopted the Presbyterian discipline,) now took a definite intelligible form; it followed of course, that on each side there would be certain understood demands and stipulations.

Some of these would of course refer to property. On the one hand, the representatives of the Church would be bound to reject all propositions of a salary; for, since the office of reproving the actions of Governors and Magistrates is one, with which they have been intrusted, and which the same principle, that forbids

them to use it factiously, will not permit them to forego, they must refuse to do any act which could by possibility change the service of the State into the service of its Ministers for the time being. On the other hand, if the churchmen had said, 'We will throw ourselves upon the liberality of our flocks;' the statesmen, I conceive, were justified in answering, 'We cannot trust you to perform a task, the right discharge of which must often offend those who are to be served by it, while you are their pensioners and dependents.' These or some such feelings on each side may, we presume, have determined the State, as a matter of policy, (apart from all other considerations,) to found, or, if Providence had already bestowed it, to uphold some permanent provision for the clergy, which would make them the hirelings neither of the government nor of the people. But there would be also stipulations of another kind, suggested, not by reason only, but by experience. The statesmen, I apprehend, were bound to demand some security from the churchmen that they were what they professed to be. 'We have found,' they may have said, 'persons wearing your gowns, bearing your episcopal seal, no co-operators with the State, but its deadly enemies; no teachers of the people, but their enslavers. We want some security on both these points, what will you give us?' Now I find, that oaths of allegiance and supremacy, or some equivalent for them, are taken, and have always been taken, by English Protestant clergymen at ordination. I find that the Thirty-nine Articles are subscribed by them at the same time. The first, I contend, is the pledge offered by the ministers of Christ that they will not be disloyal teachers; the second, that they will not be superstitious teachers.

In the first case they submit to the form imposed by the State upon all its officers; in the second, they volunteer, as a security, that form of words, which was expressly drawn up as a warning against the superstitions which the State dreads, and according to which they have been instructed in the University. I submit, that this explanation is more consistent with the facts of the case, and with reason, than any which can be produced on the other side. But this explanation is grounded upon the assertion, that the Thirty-nine Articles are not terms of communion, but are conditions of thought, primarily designed to assist education by warning students against superstitions, which have hindered, and are likely to hinder, the pursuit of knowledge, and the attainment of truth.

In answering these preliminary objections, we have discovered that object which the University proposes to itself in imposing Articles. These are our *conditions of thought;* by these the teachers engage to teach; by these the learners engage to learn. But I do not imagine that, by establishing this point, I shall have brought over any considerable number of adversaries to believe that this imposition is reasonable. They may perceive that the grounds, on which they have attacked the existing system, are unsound; but the attack itself they will not abandon. On the contrary, I can easily imagine a person speaking thus: "The Articles are less objectionable to me, in the character of a Religious Test, than in this new character of intellectual conditions. To force a particular Creed upon the conscience is a device of ordinary priestcraft, we know what it means. There is no

trickery or underhandedness in it. The desire of saddling the mind with theological rules of thought, under pretence of emancipating it, is more cunning and more odious. It is not, however, new. When have not kings and priests pretended that their schemes of bondage, or blood, were contrived for the special good of those who were the objects of them?" Now separating the argument in this passage from the vituperation; there are two distinct grounds of complaint against us. The objector may mean that the University is unjust because it imposes conditions of thought upon its students at all—or that it is unjust and illiberal because these conditions are theological. And we shall find, I believe, that most of our opponents do actually fall into one of these two classes. Some talk of the great tyranny which is practised where that is taken for granted, to which many object, and which therefore ought to be proved, when prejudice is substituted for evidence. This is an objection to conditions of thought *as such*. It does not apply at all more to theological conditions of thought than to physical. For every one knows that there are differences of opinion, and most wide differences of opinion, upon those questions, differences affecting not particular parts only, but the very law and method of the whole study. The other class, of which Lord Fitzwilliam is a specimen, maintain, that it is a great hardship to impose "on boys fresh from Eton, Articles treating of such subjects as free-will, predestination, &c." This is an objection to the *subject matter* of our Articles.

Are conditions of thought justifiable in education? This is our first question, in the discussion of which we must not be interrupted with the exclamation,

"Oh! but you impose *such* conditions upon us!" for that point will be considered afterwards.

If conditions of thought are justifiable, of what kind should they be? This is our second question, in discussing which we must not be interrupted with exclamations, "Yes, but why *force* these upon us?" for that point we shall have settled already.

With respect to those who object to conditions of thought altogether, I fear that they are labouring under a great misapprehension.

They fancy that there are conditions of thought imposed at Oxford, and that none are imposed at Edinburgh, London, Göttingen, Berlin. I deny the position altogether. I say conditions of thought are imposed upon every student at every one of these Universities. Every one of the lecturers or teachers at each of them imposes his own conditions of thought upon the mind of his pupil. In so far forth as he teaches his pupil at all, he teaches him by imposing upon him his own conditions of thought, and in so far forth as that pupil learns of that teacher, he learns by assenting and consenting to his conditions of thought. Granted that he now and then kicks vehemently against the dicta of his teacher, granted that he discovers some suppressed premiss in the argument or mind of his teacher, from which he dissents; just so far as he does so, he does not learn of that teacher. Twist the question as you will, it is imposible it should be otherwise. If the parent who sends his son to an University, does not understand that he is sending his son to learn something, and that the terms upon which he learns any thing are that certain conditions of thought will be imposed upon him, and that his son

will assent and consent to those conditions of thought; if he does not know this, or if he fancies that his particular son will be exempt from this universal law, and will get his information in some other method, he is practising a very gross imposition upon himself. But no parent does really act upon such a ridiculous supposition. He speaks prose, though he does not know it. He considers with himself whether the teachers in this or that University are most likely to teach his son rightly, whether he can most safely trust him to this set of persons, or to that. And this is all one as if he said to himself, Are the conditions of thought which this or that set of persons will impose on my son the most just, the most reasonable, the most likely to preserve him from falling into error, and assist him in finding truth?

In Professor Turton's interesting pamphlet upon this question, we are told, that two signal attempts have been made to conduct academies without any impositions of Articles. One of these experiments was made by Dr. Doddridge at Northampton, the other by Mr. Belsham. The learned Professor discusses the *success* of these experiments. I deny their *reality*. I deny that either Dr. Doddridge or Mr. Belsham did teach without imposing conditions of thought on their pupils.

With respect to the former, the proof is easy. I have before me a posthumous work of Dr. Doddridge, entitled, "A Course of Lectures on the principal subjects in Pneumatology, Ethics, and Divinity." London, 1763. These were his Lectures, delivered to his pupils in the Academy at Northampton. The book opens thus:

Part I.

" Of the powers and faculties of the human mind.

Axiom 1.

" Existence is a simple idea, which we get both by consci-
" ousness and observation.

Definition 1.

" Whatever our thoughts are immediately employed about,
" whether as simply perceiving it, or as asserting or denying
" any thing concerning it, is called an idea.

Scholium.

" We do not here enter largely into the distinction which
" the metaphysicians make, between *Ens reale*, which exists
" without any dependence upon our thoughts, and *Ens ratio-*
" *nis*, which owes its existence to its being the object of them;
" nor into the question between the Realists and Nominalists;
" but by Being in the process of this discourse we mean *Ens*
" *reale*.

Definition 3.

" Whatever is contained in the adequate idea of any being,
" is called its properties.

Corollary 1.

" A being is the same with all its properties taken together.
" And, therefore,

Corollary 2.

" We can have no conception of any substance distinct
" from all the properties of the being in which they inhere;
" for this would imply that the being itself inheres, and so
" on to infinity.

Definition 4.

" Body is an extended solid being.

AXIOM 2.

"Thought is a simple idea which we get by reflecting on "what passes in our own minds.

DEFINITION 5.

"Spirit is a thinking being, or a being which has the power "of thought."

There are four quarto pages more of Axioms and Definitions, in this strain, before the Author proceeds to a single Proposition or Demonstration.

Are not these conditions of thought? Are not they disputable conditions of thought? Are not they conditions of thought, against which not a few priest-ridden Englishmen, but five sixths of the schools in enlightened Germany, one half of the schools in liberal France, would solemnly and indignantly protest?

It is equally false that Mr. Belsham imposed no conditions of thought upon his pupils. What was the scheme of which he boasted so much as the proof and token of his liberality? He set his pupils to discover all the texts in Scripture which favoured the assertion of our Lord's Divinity, and all which impugned it. They were to count the forces on each side, strike the balance, and make up their minds. Now in this act all these conditions of thought were assumed. It was assumed, that one class of those assertions do not, as we believe, sustain and uphold the other, so that either one would be false, if the other were taken away, but that they are in fact contradictions, of which the first or the last must be squared, to coincide with the other. It was assumed, that the Bible is not, as it appears to be upon the face of it, the record of a series of facts, through which the nature of God is gradually evolved

and exhibited to the view of man, but that it is a set of definitions. Lastly, it was assumed that these young men could arrive at truth on a moral question, by the exercise of a single one of their faculties, namely, that faculty or that branch of the discursive faculty, which is conversant with the definition of names. All these three assumptions must have been made and imposed upon his pupils, for these only will make reasonable the task upon which he set them[a].

The pupils may or may not have been conscious that they were assenting to these conditions of thought, and were acting upon them. The teacher may or may not have been conscious of them himself. It would be a poor compliment to his logical powers to suppose he was not, but neither their ignorance nor his makes the least difference to the question. The conditions were, to all intents and purposes, imposed by the teacher, and assented to by the pupils.

Is there then no difference in the course pursued by the University of Oxford, in its imposition of the Articles and that pursued by Dr. Doddridge, Mr. Belsham, and the Universities of Germany or of Scotland? There is, and a very important difference; a difference, which respects both the parents and guardians of the students, and the students themselves. In Oxford, the conditions of thought upon which the teachers teach, and the learners consent to learn, are *stated*. She holds forth the Thirty-nine Articles, and says to the parents of every youth who

[a] Whether there be not a fourth assumption implied in these, and especially in the last, that truths respecting the nature of God can be arrived at without any prayer to God or communion with Him, is a deeply interesting point, which I leave to the reader's consideration.

is sent to her, 'See, these are our conditions of thought; upon these we propose to teach your child. If you like them, well; if not, send him somewhere else.' In the other institutions which I have mentioned, the parent must get at the conditions of thought, according to which his son will be trained, as he can. He may make fair and reasonable enough guesses on the subject, guesses upon which, without the least unwarrantable presumption, he may act, but they must be guesses: the teachers bind themselves to nothing; there is no direct positive contract on their part as to the terms which they mean to impose, in a case in which he knows some terms must be imposed. This is the difference as to the parents or guardians of the pupils; next, as to the pupil himself. This difference will be more readily apprehended, if we consider what are the objects of University education, as distinguished from other education.

Facts are communicated to the *child.* He is told, for instance, that the Earth goes round the Sun; and, after having received this information upon the authority of his parent, he is led by various gradual processes into the apprehension of what it means. *Laws* are communicated to the *boy;* he is apprized, for instance, of the law of gravitation, and to this he is taught to refer the fact so contrary to sense and experience, which has been announced to him in his childhood and had by degrees become part of his actual faith. Here the education of most men closes. Happy, if they have been under the guidance of those, whom they could, in the first instance, trust implicitly, and who, secondly, were anxious for nothing so much as to convert their implicit faith into an explicit rational faith. But for some is reserved a third stage of edu-

cation. They are to be professional students. They are to know not only facts and laws, but to understand the processes of mind through which various facts and laws have been evolved; they are to pass, as it were, into the position of the first discoverers of these facts or laws, and to go with them into the cells and avenues of thought, out of which, and through which, they have worked their way into light and clearness. The professional student is not only to know that the earth goes round the sun, and to refer this, and all similar and subordinate facts, to the law of gravitation, but he is to read the Principia. These men in truth know no more than their brethren, but they are the stewards and watchers of all that is known, and the guides to what is yet unknown; and they are fit to be so, because they make themselves acquainted with the different obstructions arising from the darkness of the human mind, to the discovery of truth, or to the retention of it. Now if these remarks have at all unfolded the idea of University education, they will also have unfolded the difference between Oxford, and the other institutions of which I was speaking.

The child and the boy have facts and laws communicated to them, but the conditions of the understanding itself, the laws under which it must act, in order that it may act freely, these are not communicated to either of them, for they do not belong to their stage of growth. But when the young man is entering upon a course of professional study; when he is becoming, for the first time, strictly speaking, a student, seeking truth for himself, though not alone or without guides; is it fair, is it just, to keep from him the knowledge of these conditions? Is it not

right, is it not honouring his advancing manhood, to take it for granted, that he now understands whereabouts he is, that he appreciates and yet contemplates with becoming awe the noble position of being himself now admitted to the privilege of a thinking rational creature, and that he has learned by experience of the strifes and waywardness of boyhood, how inevitably he must forego all these privileges, and sink back into the condition of a beast and a slave, unless he will submit every portion of his mind as well as of his character to the guidance of reasonable laws? It may be very ridiculous to assume the existence of such a temper of mind; but is it not more ridiculous to frame institutions for learning on the assumption of the absence of that, without which learning is impossible? If there be no desire of knowledge, no feeling of being a student, none of the dispositions which may be wrought up gradually into this feeling, I know not how instruction is possible; but if there be these feelings, then I contend, that the student has a right to require from his teachers that he shall not be left in the dark respecting the laws and conditions of study any more than about the mere facts of it. He has a right to require, that the conditions of thought in his teacher's mind should be set before him, and that he should not be left to get at them hereafter by laborious inference. The difference then between Oxford and other Universities is, not that she imposes conditions of thought upon her students, and that they assent and consent to them; for so far all institutions are alike; but that *she states* what are her conditions of thought. Which method has the advantage, which is the more honest, and more favourable to a student's

progress, I leave to the consideration of reasonable men.

'But why are your conditions of thought theological? theological and nothing else? Are your studies merely theological? If it be so, tell us plainly. We fancied that you professed to instruct our sons in several branches of human knowledge; or, perhaps, your conditions of thought need not bear any reference to those studies. They are to govern your whole system of education; and yet they teach only upon one branch of it. Very satisfactory conditions indeed: very like their pretended counterpart, Bacon's Novum Organon, which governs the whole class of subjects which are comprehended under the head of Natural Philosophy, whether Geology, Chemistry, Astronomy, or any other; prescribing a method which is as applicable to one as to another, warning against superstitions to which one as much as another is liable. And then it is odd that you should just have lighted upon this one particular subject—Theology! why not any other? why not conditions of thought for Poetry or History? why for just this, which we have fancied that priests were rather anxious to get the first and last word upon? Gentle Doctors, tell us why?' With these or some such phrases will Mr. Bulwer, or whoever is to be the new advocate of the Dissenters, entertain the House of Commons, if the position for which I am contending should chance to be maintained by any member on the other side. I purpose to answer the question. I purpose to shew why conditions of thought, which are intended to regulate the whole system of studies in a University, ought to be theological, and ought not to be any thing else. And that the grounds of my ar-

gument may be the better understood, I begin with this concession. I admit, that, if the conditions of thought imposed in a University do not deal with questions, which must naturally, and without laborious deductions, rise out of the subjects which are studied in that University, and these questions such as must be answered in order to make the subject intelligible; or, if there is any one subject studied at the University, to which they do not so refer, that this study could suffer from the want of them; or, if they do not take cognizance of such errors and superstitions, as can be shewn from experience to have interfered with the pursuit of all these studies, and as can be further shewn to endanger them now as much as in former times; they do not fulfil the purpose for which they have been devised and are imposed.

In discussing the question, I shall act as if Mr. Thirlwall had proved his proposition, that Theology is no *direct* or *primary* part of University instruction. I do not for a moment acknowledge that proposition to be proved. I believe that there are three objects of ordinary human interest, GOD, MAN, NATURE; and that our education is not universal, if there is not a distinct branch of study corresponding to each of these objects. But I waive this point. I shall suppose that we are only concerned with two of these subjects. And I shall discuss the question in this way; I shall enquire what are the questions, which most directly and inevitably arise out of those studies which relate to man, and most require conditions of thought to make them profitable, and to hinder them from turning into superstitions. I shall then endeavour to shew, that there exists between these studies and those which relate to *nature*, which have as I confess Ar-

ticles or an Organon of their own, such a connection, that the latter cannot be cultivated where the former are neglected, or are not conducted under right conditions.

The studies which are included in our Literæ Humaniores[c] at Oxford, are the same which I suppose pass under that name or some similar one in other Universities. They are these, Poetry, History, Ethics, which may roughly be said to correspond with what are called mixed Mathematics in the course of natural studies. The two remaining studies, Philology and Logic, answering to the pure Mathematics in the same course. I begin with Poetry.

I will not enter into any metaphysical discussions respecting the reasons which have induced the University to make Poetry a branch of its studies. A University professing to study Man, would certainly have laid itself open to most reasonable imputations, if such a subject had been omitted. If, indeed, with a learned Archbishop and distinguished member of the University of Oxford, we believed that Poetry means thoughts put into ornamented language, our attention to it is utterly unjustifiable. But only very illustrious personages are entitled to deal in such parodoxes as these. Common persons must maintain the com-

[c] It would be almost superfluous to mention, were there not numbers in our day who scorn philology, and never look into our older writers, that the word Humanity in its vulgar sense as equivalent with gentleness or kindness, especially towards the lower orders of creation, in its scholastic sense as equivalent with cultivation, refinement, φιλοκαλία, and in its philosophical sense as the cognate substantive to human (*Homo* sum *humani* nihil alienum a me puto) is the same word, the last meaning of which includes both the former, as the second properly understood includes the first.

mon faith, that poetry has made its way to the hearts of men in all ages, only because it is the expression of some of their deepest, most real, and most permanent feelings. On this ground, and on this ground only, has it a place in a course of Humanity. Whilst pursuing this study, I am encountered with some very deep and embarrassing questions. What, it will be said, does the University of Oxford then require its pupils to study that class of writers in the seventeenth century, whom Johnson has stigmatized as the metaphysical poets, or those more justly deserving the name, who have risen up in our own day, in England or in Germany? She requires no such thing. But she does not think it a hardship upon boys fresh from Eton to impose upon them the reading of Homer, or even of the Greek Tragedies. Now I imagine, that any one reading Homer in a plain and simple way, with his eyes open, is likely to make some such observations as these. Here is a most living exhibition of men like myself, feeling and acting, but all the actions and doings of these men, all their feelings, all their energies, are referred to the influence and operation of a race of superior invisible beings. I open the first book, and I find the ordinary fact of a pestilence raging through a camp, attributed to the agency of a superior power. I pass on a step further, and I find the heart of a chieftain influenced to the act of calling a council by another power. I read on a little further, and I find a description of a conflict passing in the mind of the same chieftain, of which an invisible protectress is conscious, and which she strives to calm. I proceed farther, and I am presented with one of these beings as an object of adoration and propitiation. I find another an object of filial entreaty and supplication.

I find the same power acting as a mediatrix between her human son, and one who is described as the common parent of all visible and invisible creatures; and before I close this first book, I am presented with a vision of these powers, no longer in their relation to man, but forming a society and fellowship among themselves. And this book is but a specimen of all that follows it. Have I a description, exquisitely and self-evidently true, of the conflict which passes in the mind of a frail beauty when summoned to the side of her unworthy lover; the resistance of feminine dignity, and the temptation of habitual vanity and self-indulgence? I am told that the nurse who summoned her is the goddess of Desire, taking for the time the form of a hag, speaking through her voice to an answering spirit in the heart of Helen. Do I hear of a chieftain displaying unwonted energy and prowess? it is a goddess who inspired him with all the energy and life that gave him a glory in the sight of men. Do I hear of a skilful archer tempted to break a solemn treaty sealed by the blood of sheep and the pledging of right hands? it is an invisible power, that very power to whom he owes the skill of which he is vain, who tempts him to the deed. And wherever I turn, I find myself saluted with descriptions of heroes, who have at once a divine and human parentage, these heroes being the deliverers of the earth from their oppressors, and the founders of national societies. And, lastly, I find every national society or fellowship subsisting only in the faith of some invisible protector, by whose favour it acquired its order, by whose favour it maintains its union, and whose desertion must cause its destruction. I say, it is impossible for any body, quietly and calmly reading Homer, and wishing to understand it, to avoid making

these observations. But, if the mind of a student were so obtuse through want of previous exercise, it is the very business of his teacher to awaken him to these observations, for unless he make them, Homer is to him a mere dead letter. He may be able to construe the Greek, but he will not consider the Poem as part of a course of Humanity; it will teach him nothing of his fellow creatures, nothing of himself. But, if he has not utterly passed over facts, lying upon the very surface of the book which he is reading, and requiring no cunning nor acuteness to bring them out, an enquiring mind will suggest to itself, or intelligent teachers will suggest to it, such reflections as these. Here is a man who describes all that I see with the greatest clearness, and brings it before me with a new light and power, enters into my own common feelings, a thoroughly honest straightforward writer in every respect, presenting me with a whole world of thought and speculations. Yet not in the way of thought or speculation either, but in the simplest, most practical manner, as connected with the every day doings and feelings of himself and his fellow creatures. That these thoughts and feelings are a mere artificial machinery devised for the improvement of his poem, is a notion so monstrous and ridiculous, so contrary to the plain facts of the case, so entirely confuted by the poet's age, and by the simplicity of his character, so evidently borrowed from the practice of poets, who have indeed contrived a machinery because they have been themselves mere machines, writing from no inward impulse, and working up every real thing into the artificial unmeaningness of their own minds, that any one who reads the poem, and entertains it, must have given both his heart and his understanding a holiday. These

thoughts must form the very staple of humanity; they have existed in all ages with more or less clearness, in proportion as men were more or less able to understand what is passing within them. Here I find them mixed up with much evident contradiction and absurdity, but they must have a meaning; what is that meaning? there must be something in them, what is that something? and thus these mighty subjects, the origin and source of the plagues and evils which we see in the world, the meaning of sacrifice, mediation, an invisible fellowship, besides that which exists on earth, temptation, the law of conscience, the foundations of national society, the connection of our intercourse with each other, and our intercourse with the invisible world, in a word, nearly every subject which enters into Theology, nearly every subject which enters into our Thirty-nine Articles, is inevitably suggested to every enquiring and meditative mind by the perusal of the Iliad. I say nearly all; for Lord Fitzwilliam will say, 'I do not see those subjects to which I particularly referred, as unfit for the consideration of Eton boys, and the House of Lords.' Perhaps not. I could easily prove that these subjects are necessarily involved in those which stand out on the very surface of the Homeric poems. But I will get at nothing in the way of inference and implication.

Homer, however, is not the only poet whose works boys fresh from Eton are in the habit of reading, and whose works the University of Oxford, as well as most other Universities, requires them to read. Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, are reckoned at Berlin and Bonn, and even in Edinburgh and London, fit subjects for youthful study; and I ask any one who has ever looked into any of those

authors, whether he can read a single play of any one of them, with the calm attention which is expected of a student, nay, with the sagacity which is looked for in an ordinary reader, without having this awful question of freedom and necessity presented to him, even thrust upon him? I should like to find a man who can honestly say, I have read a Greek play, and who does not know that this mighty problem was exercising the minds of its authors, and who does not see that each tragedy supposes, and is more or less palpably occupied, with this controversy? Who does not feel, that tragedy itself is unmeaning, and never could have had existence, if there had not been this problem, and if it did not disturb the thoughts of men, just in proportion as they thought or meditated at all? And how much a part of humanity this controversy is, how utterly impossible it is for a man not to feel an interest in it, unless he has plunged into the depths of sensuality, or hardened himself into an intellectual monster, who takes part in all disputations but has no sense of the real heart-question which is at the bottom of any, the student will become more and more aware, as he enters into the spirit of these writers, and especially as he compares them with each other. If he really understands these plays, written in the early ages of the world by men, who expressed what they knew to be the wants and cravings of man, and whom all subsequent ages, by adopting their works as a staple literature, have recognised in this respect as no pretenders to a knowledge which they did not possess, he must be exercised with this controversy, he must require conditions of thought for the conduct of his understanding, which do not pass it over, but deal manfully with it. For

no one who uses himself honestly can believe, that any of the thoughts and feelings which those poets have evoked in his mind, are satisfied by them, no one can say Æschylus and Sophocles have brought me to any comfortable solution of this mighty problem. They awaken me to doubts, anxieties, self-questionings. Thanks be to them for it, or rather thanks be to Him, who by such means, or by any means, will rouse up his creatures, his children, from the stupid slumbers of sense and selfishness, to ask what they are, and what He is. But such doubts, such questions, are not like those of the professional sceptic, doubts, for doubting sake; they are doubts which *demand* satisfaction, and which know that they have a right to it. Those teachers who begin with awakening them in their pupils' minds, without knowing that they have the means of answering them, soon repent of what seems but an act of wanton cruelty, and seek to lay the spirits which they have raised, charming some to rest with the vulgar incantation "this only means," and persuading others (most sage and logical counsellors!) to scorn the voice of reason and conscience, because thousands in all ages had been troubled with it before them. But Christian instructors have no such ignoble artifices for abating the longings and destroying the freedom of the human spirit. They know that there is a satisfaction for all these anxieties, a home and sabbath for the wearied spirit of man, an ark for the dove that has been hovering solitary and sad over waters, beneath which is lying a fair world, that is yet to come forth in its morning freshness and beauty. Such teachers know, that the explanation of all that the soul desires to know, after it has visited every gloomy abyss of thought, and

ascended every mount of speculation, is contained in that simple faith, into which the child is admitted at the font, and which it learns from a mother's lips.

The second department in the Oxford Course of Humanity is History. History means properly enquiring or asking questions. This was precisely the sense which Herodotus attached to the word. He found a great many facts around him which puzzled him, and he went about questioning what they meant. Now in this pretty child's book all those questions, which were suggested by the reading of Homer, come again before us, but in a new shape. There the question was, respecting thoughts and feelings, which we find rising up in men's minds the moment they are awakened to consciousness and self-reflection. *Here* the question is, respecting broad facts affecting the outward condition and relations of men. If Homer shewed me that men cannot feel or realize the possibility of association with each other, except in the belief of a connexion with some beings above them, I have the pictures of societies cohering by the recognition of such superior beings, and apparently exhibiting modifications of character, precisely corresponding to the nature of their faith. Here I have descriptions of hordes of shepherds, cemented by no policy, having no law but that of the family, and in their mythology, as it is delivered to me by the simple and honest narrator, I see nothing but traditions of departed heroes, or the worship of objects of direct sensible utility, with the highest mixture possible of awe and mystery, with the slightest mixture possible of grandeur and beauty. There I find a people, bound together by strong cords of allegiance to a sovereign, and of profound respect for a sacerdotal caste, accurately

partitioned into territorial nomes, and in all the arts which minister to animal life, most eminent; exhibiting reverence, subordination, and obedience, but seldom arising in their conceptions above the forms of brute nature, and never ascending into intellectual freedom. Not to question now how these features in the national character were connected with the slavish utilitarian character of their minds,—not to demand how yet this slavery consisted with a certain cultivation of letters, a certain portion of law, and a certain perception of art, which raised them above mere savage hordes,—seems impossible for any man who is studying with any sort of application and earnestness. And again, when he beholds a mighty empire, compacted and orderly, aptly arranged according to a fine scheme of subordination and interdependence, the people not outwardly unhappy, but exhibiting no moral energies or life; not to compare this state of things with the two last described,—not to enquire how the outward and inward condition of each may be affected by the faith of each,—not to compare the Priest of Memphis with the Magian of Susa,—not to enquire how their reverence for a vital, wonderful power, expressed in no images, suggesting thoughts to man of the most awful secret energies of nature, but unconnected with any of his own feelings or sympathies, acted on the feelings of the Persian, and produced a difference between him and the idolater of definite animal forms,—seems to imply an absence of all the qualities which are expected in a student.

And again, when there is exhibited to a student a free commonwealth—loose and incoherent, subject to perpetual vicissitudes, but yet full of power and energy and intellectual life—it seems hard to suppose that he

will not ask himself, what connection there is between this form of national development and that mythology, which brought men into direct and immediate connection with the gods, but which took from them nearly all their awfulness, (save what was preserved in the mysteries of Eleusis, which every Grecian patriot therefore held most precious,) in which the most splendid objects of nature were honoured, not as the manifestation of some hidden power, but as shrines of beatified human creatures, whose forms might be conceived by the imagination, and presented to the eye. Now whatever form these questions take, they must involve theology. It may be that you refer the worship entirely to the character or the circumstances of the people; but then, if history be true, if the facts do not deceive us, similar states of character, or similar circumstances, will produce similar results; and, whether they take precisely or not the shape in which we see them in ancient history, they must take some shape, with which it is important for us to be acquainted. The mythological forms may be departed for ever, at least from our own land, but the notions which produced those forms cannot have departed, unless we have ceased to be men. To understand then what these notions are, how they bear upon each other, how they have affected society, must even on this, the lowest view of the case, be part of the questionings of the historical student. But then, if he is to be guided in these questionings, if he is to set out with a chart of his journey, these subjects must find a place in that chart, they must be taken notice of in the conditions of thought which are framed for his direction.

That we may not build entirely on one history, let

us turn to Rome. In that compact society, where the energies of human character and the power of human law became so mighty, are we not independent of mythological phenomena? Not certainly if we look at the simple facts of that remarkable story. Let a man enter upon the study of Roman history with the determination to avoid the impertinent intrusion of questionings which lead him straight into theology; and he must close his books, or read them with the vacancy of an idiot. How can he help seeing, that a reverence as profound, as that which was exacted from the Magian for a natural object, was paid by the Roman to a moral being; a being, not more distinguished from the intellectual objects of Athenian worship, than from the Spartan deity, who was a god of arbitrary order; whereas the Roman Jupiter (Ζεῦ πάτερ) was the founder and upholder of all actual order and relationship? How can he put together the reverence for paternal authority,—the unceasing fire of Vesta (Hestia), the goddess of domestic ties,—the tradition of the origin of the state in a son rescuing his father and the household gods from destruction,—or the myriad facts, of which nearly every one of the exquisite stories which embellish and almost form the history of Livy supplies an instance, demonstrating that the organization and permanence of the Roman state altogether depended on the reverence for family ties,—and not observe how that reverence was interwoven with the character of the national mythology? Or can he go forward to the age of Cicero—the age in which luxury had destroyed in great part these family feelings, when divorce, as the history of the great orator itself shews, was an event of constant occurrence, and when political morality, as his letters bear too faithful

witness, was a forgotten name among all but two or three of the old Roman aristocrats—can he help comparing these facts with the moral and theological writings of the same persons, and observing how the quick-eyed sceptics of that age, perceiving the absurdities of the popular machinery in which the truth of a God of Righteousness was embodied, began to believe that the whole was an invention of state-craft, to be used indeed, but with a thorough comprehension on the part of wise men that it was not meant for them. How these different opinions and states of mind bear upon each other; how much they had to do with the downfall of the republic, and with the establishment of a Divine Imperator, a God-king, reigning not by divine *right*, but more or less as a divine *person;* must surely be points that suggest themselves to every thinking reader, and questions, surely, not unworthy of those who are destined to be legislators. Possibly if some bearing that name had meditated upon them a little more diligently, we might have been saved a good deal of flimsy argumentation, and some very stale common places, tricked out in a new and fashionable garment. Possibly they might have found, that the connection between the faith of a state and its political existence was not one, which has been started in modern days by Churchmen, but is one which has occupied the thoughts of men, ever since men could think at all. It requires no great liveliness of apprehension to discover, that religion may be used to serve the purposes of interested statesmen, or even that a system of religion is necessary to keep up good order and government. Either of them is the ordinary conclusion of the most careless and heartless reader of history; but they, who are weary of schemes, weary of

systems, anxious to understand facts, to understand themselves, are busy with a different problem; they are asking themselves, what is a nation, how does it consist, by what is it upheld? they know it has a foundation deeper than the crude theories of sophists, or the omnipotent decrees of the Houses of Parliament. They know that legislators can lay no foundation, can erect no constitution; all they can do is, to learn what the foundation, what the constitution is; and having that learning, to take such measures as shall uphold it, or destroy it. To gain this learning is the object of history; those who have it not will find, when the great conflict comes, that they cannot steer their course aright, or save their country, or even their lands, from destruction, by all their tricks, and doublings, and courtings of a triumphant mob. Therefore I contend, that we should continue to impart such knowledge to future legislators, and that we should continue to impose on them such conditions of thought, as we find will enable them to receive it effectually.

Before I conclude this section, however, I ought to mention, that, if I had chosen to diverge from the plan which I proposed to myself of considering what questions arise naturally out of the study of ancient authors, and, if I had supposed any student to read, as it is probable most real Oxford students will read, modern histories not written by Churchmen, but by those most opposed to all Churchmanship, by the writers of modern France and Germany, then I should have stumbled much more directly upon those very questions to which Lord Fitzwilliam alluded, for there is no man who is the least acquainted with those modern schools, but knows that questions of

liberty and necessity connect themselves, not accidentally and collaterally with their histories, but from the actual ground-work of them. Whether therefore we turn to ancient narrations of facts, or to modern systems of histories, to whatever point we fly, in order to avoid these intricate and embarrassing questions, they will pursue us; we cannot get rid of them; we must face them.

The student of Ethics at Oxford uses for his text book a work which is not the production of any Churchmen, but which has been bequeathed to us by the Schools of Greece. The experiment then in this case also is a fair one. If Christian Theology be required to clear any difficulties which he raises, it is difficult to suppose that there has been any collusion or priestcraft to cause that it should be so. Now I am bold to affirm, that he does raise such difficulties as nothing but Theology can solve; and those, difficulties, which cannot be passed over, which must be fairly encountered, if we are not willing to be cowardly, feeble, and slavish students.

There is a parodox which meets us in the very outset of the Nicomachean Ethics. It is entwined with the very roots of the author's system. It is not discovered by a laborious collation of paragraphs. Aristotle even forces it upon our attention. He tells us not once or twice, but again and again, that moral habits presume moral energies, and that moral energies presume moral habits. It would be very delightful to an anxious student, who, in obedience to Aristotle's own repeated commands, is viewing the subject not abstractedly, but in reference to his own state and conduct, if he could believe that this was a circle described through some inadvertency by his skilful and

watchful master. But he cannot believe it. The more he reflects upon what passes within him, the more he perceives that the circle is in nature, is in himself. By one brought into the perplexed and wretched state of mind which the discovery produces, who feels that he has the sea before and the armies of Egypt behind,—that he must have habits, but that he is utterly inconstant and irregular,—that in order to obtain them he must have energies, but that he is weaker than a child,—I should have a chance of being listened to with something of affectionate attention if I told him, that, without taking that dreadful alternative to which I know he is often tempted, of convincing himself, as, alas! he too soon may, that he *has* energies and can *create* habits by becoming a determined sensualist, there is a way for him into satisfaction upon that, which is to him the most real and amazing difficulty. I do not believe that such a person will utterly scout me as a mystical prater, if I remind him of words which he has often heard, and once perhaps with a kind of pleasure, but which of late, since they seemed big with unrealized meaning, have fallen upon a dull impatient ear; such words I mean as these, "He shall put on righteousness as a cloak; he shall clothe himself with them (moral graces) as a bride adorneth herself with jewels;" such phrases as form a sort of ground to all the imagery of Scripture, and are explained by a number of expressions in which there is no imagery;—if I tell him that these words are no mere Eastern flourishes; for that, even if he did not believe them to be inspired by the Spirit of Truth, as a means of imparting truth to men, yet peculiar diction can never be found in any good poetry except for the purpose of revealing some latent meaning;—if I urge him to trace the re-

currence of similar phraseology in another language where he is no longer surrounded by an atmosphere of poetry, in calm letters, amidst subtle argumentation and practical admonition, the authors of these telling us moreover, that they are speaking of the same object which was seen afar off in those earlier raptures, now brought nigh to the apprehensions of men;—if I shew him that this idea of clothing[a] or putting on the goodness or beauty of another—attracted to us, and made entirely our own, yet by some other law than that of natural appropriation—does alone fulfil the idea of *habits* which Aristotle sets forth, which conscience witnesseth—telling us too sadly, that it is by our hearts delighting in some impure object that they become partakers of its properties,—a truth, to which language itself, streaked as it so often is with the light of truths just rising above the horizon, does, not only in the ordinary acceptation of the word among ourselves, but no less if we trace it to its root where it coincides with the cognate word in Greek, most abundantly testify. And then, if, while he is already beginning to perceive that another truth is necessary to sustain this, while he is beginning to wish that the ἕξεις, the havings or holdings of the inner man, may be found to be under the same head with the ἐνέργειαι, the power therein inwrought, I shew him that it is actually so; that, if any thing be inwrought, there must be an inworker; that to reflect upon our processes of thought and not dream of such a worker is impossible; that, if we cannot help referring natural life or intellectual to Him as a giver, it is strange to

[a] ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον· Eph. iv. 24. *cf.* Col. iii. 10. Gal. iii. 27. Col. iii. 9.

doubt that moral life, the ἐνέργεια κατ' ἀρετὴν, can have any other origination; I do not question but that his own spirit, awakened to hope, will carry him over some other steps in the argument, that he will perceive that what in nature seems a hopeless mystery, forbidding all access and interpretation, has its ground in a mystery with which we may have fellowship, a mystery, in which it is no distressing paradox but holy repose to believe that He, whom we behold as an object, and He, who acts in us as a power, are "neither afore, neither after the other[b]." I do not doubt that his practical hope of coming himself to moral habits of high-heartedness, meekness, freedom, gracefulness, courage, with others that Aristotle scarcely dreamed of, yea, even to those dianoetic habits of which St. Paul speaks continually, wisdom, prudence, good counsel, practical reason, grows proportionately with his advancement in the discovery; and (which he now perceives to be the all important difference) without the feeling of selfish realization, seeing that they are all contemplated, admired, enjoyed as the beauty and glory of another who must increase as he decreases. Nor, lastly, do I doubt, that thus beginning to feel himself a man, he will look one step higher, and will feel that the mighty object, in whom he contemplates all goodness, must be the manifestation,—and the mighty power, who began all good energies within him, (and whose personality he can as little question as his own,) must be the living Spirit,—of an absolute Being, good in himself, the only source of all good, and its only end. But such thoughts as those, however necessarily arising out of the book which

[b] Creed of St. Athanasius.

we use, though the whole meaning of them is *expressed* in that Creed which children pronounce every Sunday, and though they are formally set forth in reference to intellectual studies and difficulties in our Articles, will seem strange to those whom some internal discipline has not prepared to receive them.

I will pass to another point which the most practical man in our day cannot put from him, saying, I am not concerned in this; the question, in what sense Ethics are related to Politics; which is not a point, as far as I know, directly set forth by Aristotle, but which is in so many ways suggested to his thoughtful readers—by the first words of his book, by the conclusion of it, by the celebrated comparison of contemplative with political life, by the whole context of the treatise—that to pass over it would argue a strange want of insight or zeal. He seems to speak of the science of Ethics, as a vestibule or porch to the science of Politics, and in some measure as a part of that science, as if, though it had a distinct work, its grounds were in politics. Hence the advocates of the doctrine of general consequences, those who think that the actions of a man are to be determined by their probable effects on society, claim him as a man, not indeed thoroughly comprehending their views, but, for his age, rarely illuminated. On the other hand, those, who believe that the culture of the individual life is the great work which man is to pursue—a work, which he must carry on without reference to society, though society will ultimately reap the fruits of it—allege Aristotle's notion of happiness and of virtue as decisive evidences, in spite of some inconvenient expressions, that he in the main thought with them. An unprejudiced reader will, I think, adopt

some such conclusion as this. Aristotle believed that there must be a polity before there could be ethical cultivation, for he considered education, and that imparted by the state, as every thing; he believed also that there must be ethical cultivation or there could be no polity. He found both these facts, and he left them; he dared not suppress either, because each was so; he would have been glad to reconcile them, if he could; but he was content to adopt the best practical course with the knowledge he possessed. This was the general temper of his mind. Besides being one of the keenest of observers, he was also one of the most faithful of reporters; sometimes theorizing upon facts, scarcely ever theorizing away facts. He had none of that heaven-aspiring spirit of Plato, who, keeping his eyes upon a spot in the heavens where the yet unrisen sun must be, soared aloft to meet him, and caught from him, it may be, some warmth and healing; he had no such care to explain the confusions and anomalies of earth as would tempt him to such flights, or at least no such hope of finding an explanation. He felt himself bound in by certain conditions; how they came, he could not tell; they were, and how should we act under them. As each philosophy was by turns prevalent in the Church, we see the effect of the two methods. The Platonic period gave birth to the Arian controversy. The commencement of the Pelagian was the sign that Aristotle had begun to supersede him. Each of these periods is a lesson to us how we should use these philosophers. The first, as leading us to apprehend the spiritual wants which are in us, which revelation must satisfy. The second, as shewing what outward difficulties there are in our position, which a revelation

should account for. Great, I believe, is the service which Aristotle may render to a student in this age; especially by leading him away from one-sided speculations to the observation of what there is actually in nature, which gives a plausibility, nay a reasonableness to each. So here, I am presented with a theory of general consequences. Study, say the supporters of this theory, what effect your actions will produce on yourself and on society, and regulate them accordingly. Again, I am presented with a theory of individual life. Strive to regulate your mind according to the right standard; actions will follow, which will be useful to yourself and society. In each of these there seems something, for which conscience and reason testify, and something, against which they testify,—*for* this in the first, that it does not suppose a man can by possibility act as if he were a creature separated from mankind and acting without reference to them,—*for* this in the second, that it acknowledges actions to originate, where we feel that they do originate, in states of mind,—*against* this in the first, that he must either suppose a power of producing states of mind by a mere exercise of the power of calculation, contrary to experience, or he actually substitutes the tendency of an action for the source of it, contrary to all reason,—*against* this in the second, that it either supposes a man living not surrounded with others, contrary to fact, or that he can regulate his states of mind as if this were not the case contrary to reason. Wherefore, I think, we are driven off both these schemes to those facts which are the justification of each. Man is in society, each man is a distinct, living, responsible man. It would seem that this is a fact of our constitution; but we must

understand that constitution in order to explain it. Aristotle did not understand it; and it would seem that neither do our modern philosophers of different descriptions understand it, otherwise they would leave speculations and unfold it to us. If they will tell us what the constitution for man as man is; what that constitution is, which is above every national constitution, and is the only ground of it, we will listen to them. This is the very point Plato wanted to know,—Aristotle wanted to know,—we want to know. This is the very question, which, in different ways, this age is asking itself. This is the question, which we see stirring in the minds of theoretical men, who have devised the schemes of Benthamism and St. Simonism. This is the question which is practically at work in the minds of our mechanics and handicraftsmen who form political unions. Tell us then the secret, if you know it. If you cannot, we will tell you. We have been telling it to the children in our charity schools these many years past. We teach them out of the Catechism, that they are children of God, members of Christ, heirs of the kingdom of heaven. We expound to them what we believe to be that universal constitution for man as man. We believe that we are admitted by baptism into this constitution, and laid under an obligation of making it known to other men as intended also for them. We believe that a man not understanding this constitution, attempting to set up a separate individual life, does divest himself of his glory as a man, doesnot fulfil the duties of a man. We believe that the man, who, receiving the good news that there is this constitution, and renouncing and repenting of the selfish life he has led, living as if he were personally related to the head of the polity, rejoicing to

think that he is so, (because he is a man, and not because he is any particular man,) does rise to a feeling of personal distinctness which he can never get in any other way, and which is so essential to his being, that all moral or spiritual cultivation without it is impossible. Here we say the difficulty is reconciled; and, because this great question rises out of the subject of Ethics, according to the method in which we pursue it,—because it is necessary for our well being that it should be solved,—because it is the most cardinal controversy of this day,—therefore, we say that conditions of thought setting forth the truth, which alone expounds it, are indispensable to the ethical student.

But surely, if I have been ever so successful in persuading myself that theological conditions of thought are necessary for the three mixed sciences, I must be content to exempt from their control the pure sciences of Philology and Logic. Whether they would, either of them, be better studied if they obtained this independence, is a question which the following considerations may help us to answer.

By Philology I understand that study which deals with words in reference to their meaning. It is in this respect the opposite of Logic, which, strictly speaking, is not concerned with the meaning of words at all. The one uses human discourse as a mean of attaining to a knowledge of human thought and feeling; the other explains the conditions, under which human discourse is possible. That such a study as that of language should form a prominent, nay the most prominent, subject in a course of Humanity, would seem self-evident to any one who considered what language is; that it is the very sign and organ of

Humanity, the bond of human policy and fellowship. That it should be pursued in such a method as would most clearly manifest for what purpose it is pursued, as would leave a student least at liberty to imagine that it is undertaken for mere sordid, secular ends, as would most directly conduct him not to what is accidental or peculiar in the habits of any nation, but to the permanent roots of humanity upon which their habits must have grown, seems also most necessary and rational. Yet no one who is acquainted with society can be ignorant that these principles, so far from being generally recognized, are for the most part scouted. Wise men of the earth say at their tables and tell their sons, that there is no imaginable reason, but the will and caprice of certain priests, why two dead languages (so they are pleased to call them) should for so many years be objects of wearisome devotion to the youth of this land.

Acting upon these admonitions, a young man often comes to the University with a tolerable endowment of school learning, and an easy knack of composition, intending to read the Greek and Latin poets and orators, but thoroughly determined, as he says, to eschew all derivations and particles. By discarding minute questions about words and constructions, he fancies that he shall have much more time as well as capacity to enjoy the actual beauties of great classical authors. The notion is highly plausible, but, strange to say, it does not maintain its ground long. The life and the poetry, which the student was to have obtained in such essential pureness, by some means or other very speedily evaporate. He loses his admiration for them; begins to fancy that there *is* some propriety in connecting the study of language with

them, for that language constitutes their only just title to fame; and determines to seek for his models elsewhere. But in reading the famous poets of England's best days, he is puzzled to find something of a similar feeling to that, which induced him to throw aside his classical favourites. He is oppressed in the presence of Milton with the sense of being near one, who has yoked his mind to stern laws; who into those thoughts, which 'voluntary move harmonious numbers,' has suffered no freak of taste, no unquestioned or disorderly impulse to intrude. In Shakspeare, whom he hoped to find a chartered libertine, there is the same sense of obedience sustaining power in the production of language, which had scarcely surprised him in the most learned of poets. To those therefore of modern schools, who have not suffered their free genius to be cramped by servile regard to order and reason, he betakes himself, and with them for a time he is satisfied. But presently he discovers that amusement, which he has ascertained to be the object of poetry and literature, is not the object of existence. To those practical subjects, therefore, with which the age is occupied, he now, and, as he hopes, finally, gives himself up, rejoicing that he has at length found a comfortable port after his very weary and useless travel. Amidst the realities of politics and political reasoning, he is surely safe from those idle questions about words, from which, while surrounded by a scholastic atmosphere, he found it hardly possible to escape. A short time undeceives him. He desires to enlighten his countrymen respecting the tricks, by which men, interested to hide from them sound information, draw them into various unprofitable reflections upon subjects nowise concerning their

happiness. But he finds that certain *words* exercise an inexplicable influence over the minds of his pupils, an influence, which all the demonstrations of his philosophy cannot overreach. Nay he fears that some of these words do secretly hold a certain government over his own feelings and judgment. Just at this crisis of his mind he takes up the Diversions of Purley, a book which he knew very well before, but had never studied. Here is the solution of all his difficulties! Here is a guide to all the traps and pitfalls which beset the philosopher's path! What a clear satisfactory self-proving system! So healthy and invigorating, the very elixir of intellectual life! What an admirable test it supplies for all the impositions which cunning priests or well-meaning moralists have fathered upon the world! The oppressive notion of an absolute *Truth* (fruitful cause of religious intolerance) dissolves into the trowings of each particular mind. *Right*, that fine fiction of Ethics, becomes the ordinance of a supreme power. Nor need the application of the system be limited to words of Teutonic origin. *Conscience*, what is it but knowing together with some one else, the word setting forth (how clearly!) the true doctrine that the mind of each man is a watch, the index of which, owing to some secret cooperation of outward accidents with the spring, is ever faithfully pointing to that hour, which the notions of the class he lives in have settled to be the true one? Such clear demonstrations may resist all confutations save one: the laborious corrector of other men's notions, while he is occupied with *them* will never even suspect a flaw in his scheme. But, if some sudden sickness or sorrow should bring him into conflict with himself, he will find that Tooke's are indeed

'winged words,' which take flight and desert the soul in its extremity. What avails it that he has anatomized the word Conscience in his closet, if he be confronted by a living and real reprover, who upbraids him, in language which he knows it is self-deception *not* to hear, not with having defied the notions of his class, but with having crouched to them too slavishly? What avails it that Right has been proved a mere ordinance of power, which the same power could therefore repeal, if the deep consciousness of Wrong in him tells him that there must be Law, from which he has departed, and which cannot pass away until Evil and Confusion become omnipotent? What avails it that he knows the word Truth to mean nothing, if a miserable sense of Falseness in all the judgments of his understanding, all the desires of his heart, convinces him, that there is a reality fixed and unshaken, and the most contrary to any thing that he troweth?

Now if I may suppose my imaginary student actually to pass through this awful process; and may please myself with the belief that he comes out of it, "a wiser and a sadder man," and yet withal a happy and joyful man, one who has apprehended the possibility and the fact of a reconciliation between himself and the Everlasting Righteousness and Love with which he was at war, and has practically entered into this belief; it is not difficult to guess the feelings with which, for some time after this transition, he will regard the study which had betrayed him into so many errors. He will loathe Etymology in all its forms, as only another name for opposition to every thing sacred, inward, and actual. Every reference to the derivation of a word as a test of its use he will fly from, as a contrivance to cheat him out of some good thing,

which, so long as he holds fast by common sense and avoids Metaphysics, he shall be able to retain. Alas! he soon discovers his delusion. As he becomes more acquainted with the different compartments of the religious world, he finds there are other evils, beside that dreaded one of Metaphysics, which threaten the sincerity of his heart and of his profession. With simple confidence he had taken the currency of each sect, not fancying any adulteration; but, when he begins to weigh them in the balances of the sanctuary, how many does he find light and hollow! How many words does he hear in religious circles, which, he knows, mean almost nothing! how many more, which, he suspects, mean something different in the mouths of two persons, who are nevertheless holding fancied communion, too generally a communion of hostility to some third party, by means of them! He has an indescribable sense of imposition, vagueness, confusion in his understanding and his heart. Words, words, words, seem to be ever flying about him, like locusts, and to darken the heaven above and the earth beneath. Oh! that his ears could be closed against all (that is called) intelligible discourse; that he could hear nothing but the roaring of the sea, the singing of birds, a few simple tunes, and the inconscious prattle of infancy! But this cannot be, and the momentary rebellion against the gracious appointments of God, which was implied in the wish, turns into shame and self-humiliation, when he remembers that possibly his own past wilfulness may be the cause of his present perplexities.

'Is it not possible,' he may now ask himself, 'that a foresight, and, if a foresight, doubtless an experience, of the slavery into which words may bring the soul, and

of the freedom which that man enjoys, who is their master and not their tool, may have led our ancestors to make that study which, at the University, he abandoned as not belonging to practical life, the groundwork of their education?' I think it is not improbable, that a person brought to this conviction would after all this experience return to those inquiries which might have saved him from it. And if he does, I believe he will be abundantly rewarded. If he determines to abstain entirely from theories, and honestly and experimentally to examine the actual facts of language, they will, I am persuaded, guide him into more acquaintance with himself and his fellow men, than all the Newspapers and Magazines and the (so called) books of useful knowledge. They will more tend to settle him in the assurance that he is a spiritual being; to make him feel that he is bound by an invisible chain to the past and the future, to teach him that there must be a bond of universal fellowship and brotherhood, and that bond not a natural but a spiritual one; they will more tame his understanding, which is ever struggling to shake off the pleasant fetters of the spirit, to docility and subjection than any other human study. Wherefore it was in this discipline that our elder men were especially exercised. They did not, with Johnson, believe that a word in one application is no more of kin to the same word in a different application than to any other in the language; their reason, nay, their sense, instructed by their reason, rebelled against so strange a supplication. Neither did they, with Horne Tooke, believe, that a word has indeed a root, but that it never grows from that root; that its meaning in reference to the loftiest subject, where alone we see it in its fulness

and perfection, should do homage to its lowest use, and be governed by the laws of that use[a]. Marking these two errors, the student will launch forth into a broad ocean of discovery. A single word will serve him for many a long and profitable meditation. How delightful it is to observe the word χάρις preserving so long its twofold meaning of kindness conferred, and thanks returned; yet we know not how to reconcile them, till the Apostle invests the word with a meaning in which he establishes their homogeneity,—the acting power of grace itself producing the re-acting energy of gratitude! How much may be learned by studying the word Καταλλαγὴ, if we only be solemnly careful not to restrict the last lofty meaning by its previous earthly or commercial meanings, but will rather look to see them borrowing a light and glory from the word in its transfigured state, after it has been spiritualized! And, lastly, what unfathomable abysses of thought does the word Λόγος disclose to the meditation of a humble and earnest student! It is impossible to describe what a suddenness, what a reality there is in some of these discoveries, (discoveries, I mean, not because they are literally new, but because they are so to each fresh student,) nor how entirely for a time they may possess and overpower the mind; for no one can

[a] The course of the Arian heresy is an exemplification of the natural working of this principle of Horne Tooke's system. Arius commenced his heresy by taking the *literal* and *material* sense of the words *Father* and *Son* as the basis of a logical argument, and he was led on to deny their *primary* and *essential* signification, and ultimately to reduce them to a mere metaphor. And yet it is said Theology has nothing to do with Philology: correctness in science is quite independent of orthodoxy in doctrine. See Newman's Arians of the Fourth Century, cap. ii. §. v.

help feeling, that they are connected with some of those deep and potent truths which most concern Humanity, and which we are toiling all our lives to find. Connected they doubtless are, closely and intimately connected, as the shadows which we cast from our bodies are connected with those bodies, and with the sun that is shining in the heavens. But, alas! the shadows may be mistaken for substances; those wonderful facts of Philology which indicate great truths, and which could not exist if those truths were not, may be confounded by the vain and darkened spirit of men with the truths themselves. Often has it happened so to the Physiologist; he has been crushed under the power and weight of the analogies to spiritual truths which were every where meeting him in his natural researches. He has watched the tracks of a divine spirit in every living form and substance with intense ardour and delight, till he has lost all sense of the reality and absoluteness of Him of whose presence they are the tokens. And so too, not rarely, it comes to pass with the Philologist. He, too, has sight of a ladder which is set upon earth, and is reaching to heaven: he, too, is liable to be so bewildered with the mere feeling of this connection as to lose all sense of his own insignificance, all the adoring humility which exclaims, "how dreadful is this place!" In this state of mind he is ready for those fancies and superstitions which always haunt the mind when it has become idolatrously attached to any one pursuit, however noble, when it has begun "to sacrifice unto its own net, and burn incense to its own drag." Many a gloomy page in the history of Philosophy, and in the history of the Church many a project of foul fanaticism, which has distracted mankind, but which began in the

earnest pursuit of some truth, or in the delightful discovery of some reflections cast from her perfect image, is made plain to a student of Philology by his own experience. He feels how easy it is to commit the same error, and how very difficult is the deliverance from it; for neither the evidence of those that have not studied at all—nor the grave rebuke of those who see his error, but have no sympathy with his truth—nor all the other contrivances by which men torment each other into wisdom and rectitude—can in this, as in other cases, otherwise than aggravate the evil. Outward sorrow awakening a sense of inward misery, of dreariness and heartlessness, is the medicine generally ordained by Him who answers the complaints of men's spirits out of the whirlwind, when his friends and comforters have been "darkening counsel by words without knowledge;" and none who have felt the disease will deny that it is a gentle and gracious remedy. But if this be the most usual cure, is it impossible or unwise to administer medicines, which may prevent or check both this and the other forms of disease to which I have alluded? The question cannot be an unimportant one; for though it be granted that few individuals pass through all the states of mind into which my student came; yet it is certain that there will be found in a University a class representing each of these states of mind. Nay, I believe a University must be *composed* of persons, who either neglect Philology in obedience to the fashion of the day,—or neglect it from religious scruples and fears,—or pursue it on the materialist ground of Horne Tooke,—or pursue it on the spiritual ground of our old philosophers and divines. Now for each of these classes I affirm not only that theological conditions of thought are useful, but that

no other provision would be equally useful, or would at all meet the case.

The members of the first class are wrong in this; they have never asked themselves, What is a University? What is study? What is education? They have never understood that education is from first to last a conflict with that notion of sensible utility, which is the natural notion of all men; which every savage holds of course, and which is reproduced as a refined novelty whenever civilization, advancing in a tortuous direction, touches at its extreme point the confines of barbarism. Practically to impress this fact upon the minds of students—to shew that, while the whole vocation of a University teacher is to overturn the doctrine that the worth of any thing is to be determined by its direct sensible advantages, he is yet no mere *littérateur*—that every thing he does is done with a view to an end—we must offer some sign, that our *Literæ Humaniores* are indeed what their name imports; that we prosecute each and all of them, as means to a knowledge of ourselves and of man; as means to the formation of a manly character. Now, I say, we cannot do this, by imposing Poetical conditions of thought, or Historical, or Philological; we can only do it by imposing the conditions of a science which manifestly concerns Humanity as such, and in which it discovers its own foundation and laws. And that this science is Theology, is no exclusively Christian doctrine, but is proved by the testimony of all the cultivated nations of the ancient world, and of all philosophy, save that which, as in this instance, we have shewn to be self-destructive, and tending to barbarism. Supposing then the student of the first division should derive an advantage from our Articles

themselves; supposing that by despising he should be incapable of understanding them; yet the imposition of them in the University, when he knows why they are imposed, will be a perpetual memento to him of the real purpose for which the body to which he belongs prosecutes its studies, and of the purpose for which he must prosecute them, if he wishes to go forth a more honest and wiser man than he entered it.

For the second class, the religious men, theological articles, really studied and understood, will surely preserve them, if any thing can, from that contempt of Philology, into which we have seen that some of them through misapprehension are betrayed. Solemn indeed are the warnings which they hold out to preserve a religious man from indifference to the advantages for following this study, which Providence has placed within his reach. They will shew him that numberless heresies, which have darkened the face of heaven and spread pestilence over the earth, *have be*en bred in the carcases of words, from which the life had been suffered to escape by those who were appointed to watch over their preservation and their purity. And they will warn him, by the peril of his own soul, by the peril of the souls entrusted to him, to beware lest, through self-willed negligence, the like should happen in our own day, even to his and their infinite confusion.

The third class, the Horne Tooke etymologists, are not in general aware that there is a *petitio principii* at the root of their whole system. They do not know, at least a great part of them do not, that the simple materiality of man is not proved by their master, but taken for granted. How so? Because, there being two sets of phenomena in language, one distinctly

proving man to be connected with an outward and visible world, and the other seeming at first sight to prove that he is connected with an invisible world, Tooke has assumed, that it is right and necessary to refer all the latter class of phenomena to the acknowledged laws of the former. Why? The obvious, admitted violence is justifiable only on the principle, that man is *more* likely to be only a creature of sense and matter; and therefore that, if by a little effort language *can* be persuaded not to resist this hypothesis, the effort ought to be made. Now if you can make a student feel in full force that this is begging a point which all his entreaties will not induce us to grant him for an instant; if you can make him feel that he is—not proving, but—taking for granted *that* to be false which all nations, in proportion as they were educated, have believed to be true; if you can shew him that, when he has lost this postulatum, his system, so far as it is exclusive and differs from that of other Etymologists, vanishes into air; you will act more practically upon his mind, than by special pleading all the details of Tooke's work. But how can you do this, unless you shew him that the foundation of your own instructions are laid in the acknowledgment and assertion of man's spiritual being, which assertion is not made unless you declare Theology to be the groundwork of Humanity and of all studies concerning Humanity?

Lastly, for the student of the fourth class, who is pursuing Philology steadily and in the right method, yet is liable to the danger of raising it out of its due place, nothing is so much needed as some document which sets outwardly and palpably before him mysteries of which he will meet with continual hints and

intimations while he is studying language. The habit of presenting these to himself as substantial verities, will impart a quickness, an ardour, an honest boldness, to his researches, which the men of this age never exhibit; and he will be saved from the error of substituting proofs of things, for things themselves, the signs of divinity in language for the Everlasting Word Himself. Left to his own caprices in a German University, I believe a young man, very earnest in philological pursuits, is likely sooner or later to become the tenant of a lunatic asylum, unless he should have the more wretched fate of being the founder of some new metaphysical theory, in which

> Nothing is, but all things seem,
> And we the shadows of the dream—

whereas, fortified at the outset with strong and manly conditions of thought, he may become a deliverer of *his age from* many of its confusions and superstitions, and the assertor of stern and living realities.

My chief object in the discussion on Philology was to prove, that a pure science, connected with Humanity, should be subjected to such conditions of thought as apply to the whole subject of Humanity, and not to any particular department of it. This argument is also applicable to Logic. Nevertheless it may be expedient to bring forward a few facts, from the records of the present age, and of past ages, which seem to establish this position respecting the study immediately under our consideration.

Twenty years ago, Logic was generally spoken of by liberal men as a study too useless and antiquated

for any meridian but that of Oxford. Now their opinions are altogether changed. The most University-hating priest-hating sect in England has taken Logic under its patronage; and scholastic pedantries, which would have furnished playwrights in the last age with excellent jokes against College Fellows, are now oftentimes the youthful Utilitarian's best passport to reputation.

Logic being then recognized by these dictators as a reasonable study, the questions become additionally important, To what end should it be pursued? In what manner? The end which the Benthamites propose to themselves, is the detection of fallacies in the writings or speeches of Whigs, Tories, and, above all, of Churchmen. We heartily wish them good speed in this work which they have assigned themselves; every honest man is thankful for being detected in a fallacy, and wishes that it should be exposed; the fallacies of dishonest men should be made known, for the sake of society and of truth. But we question much, whether the constant habit of looking out for fallacies, is the best qualification for discovering or correcting them. We have known some whose diligence, as fallacy-hunters, was most exemplary; whose contempt for their opponents could scarcely be equalled; but whose skill many, who fell far short of them in the two former merits, might, we think, easily have surpassed. They had a few logical formulas ready for every occasion; they talked much of subjecting their adversary's argument to a rigid analysis; they could shew very clearly that two facts because they coexist, are not therefore necessarily connected as cause and effect; and by all their contrivances, not unassisted, certainly, by that abounding compassion for the feeble-

ness of all who differed from them, to which I have alluded, they would beget very considerable astonishment and admiration in that portion of their auditors, which had implicitly adopted all their opinions beforehand. But if on returning from one of these exhibitions, you asked yourself, What has he done? What has he proved? He has shewn that certain persons have not *proved* the fact to be, as we and our countrymen generally think that it is. But his admirers believe, to a man, that he has shewn, not that the alleged fact or opinion *may not* be true, but that it *is not* true; nor, unless he had some notion of the same kind himself, could he, with such easy assurance, have laid down a series of dogmata not conceded, as he well knows, by any of his opponents, and not established by him. The warrant of such assumption was his belief that he had already wiped out all saws of books, all forms and pressures past, and that he had now a *tabula rasa*, upon which he might write what characters he pleased.

There is a fallacy, a staring fallacy, which we affirm that the Benthamites are practising, not now and then but continually, upon themselves and upon others. I do not take notice of it for the sake of confuting them, but of shewing to what grievous errors we are liable, if we set up Logic as an ἐμπειρία for the accomplishment of a specific purpose, instead of studying it as a branch of Humanity.

As Benthamism is from first to last a system of checks and limitations, it was inevitable that a study like Logic, which is definitive and not vital, which presents us with no principles of Discourse, but only teaches what conditions being violated, Discourse is impossible and contradictory, was sure to find favour

with its professors. It was equally sure to be despised by those who, having much superficial cleverness, find themselves quite able to sustain an argument, and to give it many sharp edges, without any knowledge of rules and formalities. Such a faculty, especially in this day, is most common; almost every person who has joined a little reading of newspapers, especially of debates and cross examinations, to a little acquaintance with society, and a tolerable memory and quickness of association, possesses it. If once, therefore, we are betrayed into the folly of supporting the claims of Logic upon the false pretence, that no argumentative adroitness is to be acquired without it; if we are even very anxious to deny that this adroitness may in part, and for a time at least, be diminished by the habits of mind which this study will create; we shall find ourselves continually and successfully confuted. These pious frauds by which persons are seduced into study, ought surely to be at once and for ever abandoned. It is a blessing, I think, if we are convinced that they were always dishonest, by finding that they are now useless. And thus we are again driven back upon the principle of our whole University system, that of considering this large study as unfolding some page in the great book of Self Knowledge and Human Knowledge, for which principle the imposition of Theological Articles is the grand abiding witness, and which is renounced the moment we throw them aside. But, apart from the assertion of this principle, we have direct evidence, that no central power which is not obtained from Theology, can avail to preserve Logic from becoming dangerous to the student, and destructive to every other branch of knowledge.

Let my readers, I mean the junior members of the

University, for whom alone on these points, at least, I can venture to write, reflect for a few moments upon a subject, which if it seem dry or profitless, does so, I believe, because we have been used to treat it as belonging to a past age, and have not considered, in how many of the questions most deeply concerning all classes now it is directly involved[b]; I mean, the controversy of the Realists and Nominalists. Stated plainly, the position of each side seems to be this. I hear the names dog, horse, man; I know that they describe various individual dogs, horses, men. But Scripture tells me, and Reason ratifies the words, that every thing was created after its kind. I cannot without the greatest violence divest myself of this feeling—no nor of this, that the name is a *sign* and *proof* that each of these individuals belongs to a kind. On this ground the Realist stood, and it is a ground which neither Abelard, nor Locke, nor all the philosophers on earth, can deprive him of, for it is a ground of reason and fact. But what edifice did he raise upon this ground? The conclusion that the name was, not the sign, the proof positive that there is a kind, but that the name is itself the kind. Here was death to all science, all discovery. That was

[b] Take one or two instances. The nearly most important chapter in so popular a book as that of Mr. Lyell on Geology is almost unintelligible without some knowledge of this controversy; The merits or defects of Cuvier's entire method. This for Physics. Next for Morals; 1. The question discussed in Butler's three Sermons at the Rolls Court; 2. The question whether the words *good* and *just*, will indicate degrees of meritorious superiority, or only imply the fulfilment of a law; 3. The modern Heresy respecting the doctrine of our Second and Fifteenth Articles. All these in their *intellectual* aspects, (and how much in this point does the intellectual aspect of a doctrine affect its practical aspect!) are connected with this (extinct!) dispute.

already given and known, which it is the end of science to find. But meantime what were the Nominalists doing? That they resisted this monstrous assumption, and thereby won a claim to our warmest gratitude, we own; but they went further, implicitly and often directly,—so directly, that this has now become the avowed *disbelief* of a large body of philosophers;—they denied, not that the name *is* the kind, but that there are any kinds; kind is a dream—a mere abstraction! Now here we say is, first, an outrage on reason; secondly, a system of utter confusion; thirdly, just as much as the other creed was, a death blow to discovery. That it hath been the glory of God to conceal this thing, and only to give the hint of it in names, we acknowledge; but that it is for the son of creation, the humble searcher into God's ways, to search it out, we affirm also; and if man thinks there is nothing to find, we are certain he will not seek.

But now, what was the common root of these two errors, which we see had a common effect? I answer, both stood upon a mere logical ground; both were merely dealing with definitions and abstractions. When we are assigning the conditions of discourse, it is most true that the *genus* is nothing but the last abstraction expressing the *sine quâ non;* the *caput mortuum* of all the individuals of a class. But the *kind*, which the philosopher seeks after, is to be seen and studied in the most perfect individual of the class; that one who unites all the true properties of each of the individuals in that class, without a single anomaly; that individual of the class who is the connecting point between it and some higher order. It is evident, I conceive, that the guardian conditions of Logic,

those, which shall keep it from leaping over its fence and desolating the whole field of knowledge, must be drawn from some science, which is not occupied with names but with realities; some science, which exhibits and satisfies that idea, wherewith, as you see, Logic has no connexion, for this very reason, that it is a sound substantial idea and no abstraction. Perhaps for a moment you would be inclined to say, "These conditions then should be physical; Bacon will do more than any one else can to avert this danger." But mark! no physical study is in a perfect state. Possibly its perfection will consist in the discovery of the individual which most exactly and perfectly exhibits each kind, and of the relation and subordination which exists between different kinds. A careful reflection upon the direction which physical study, when most prosperous, has taken might favour such an opinion. But even then, would there be any thing to satisfy the feelings and longings of men? See how those longings have discovered themselves in men's words and acts. Surely in the hope and belief that some one of their own race, some perfect man, will appear, who should shew forth what Humanity is, himself the while,—as the condition of his manifesting,—transcending it. Tell me what all Greek mythology is aiming at, if not at this. Tell me what men in all ages have been crying and groaning for, if not for this, and for that more awful manifestation, which they felt must be connected and mysteriously involved in this, the manifestation of—God.

See then why that happened, which you have often thought of with wonder, which you cannot think of with too much horror, that when the book of God's revelation was shut up, when faith of a direct access

to him through one Mediator was lost, when the idea of a righteous King of men was banished by the intolerable fiction of a visible mortal substitute, Logic leaped into the throne of Theology, and with dry skeleton hands swayed her awful sceptre. Oh! do you wonder at the rage with which first Wickliffe at Oxford, and then Luther at Wittenberg, beheld the ghastly abstraction, or at the divine energy with which they were inspired to hurl it down? Have you the heart to condemn them, if sometimes they treated the whole science as if it were rubbish, and upbraided in no mild language its innocent discoverer? Yet do you not admire more the calm wisdom of our Reformers, which compelled the polluted study into their service, and forced it to do yeoman's duty against those, who had at once deified and degraded it? This did they, when they framed our Theological Articles. This was the fortress which they reared against the incursions of Logic; this was the splendid example they gave of its manly and practical use.

And I adjure those who have the rule in our University now, not to believe that what was needed for our protection in the sixteenth century, has become less necessary in the nineteenth. Where is this strange notion bred, that we are creatures of an altogether different race and order from our forefathers; that we are not subjected to the same infirmities; liable to the self-same blunders, superstitions, corruptions? Methinks such an opinion indicates a most heartless want of sympathy with the past; which, being one of the worst symptoms of national degeneracy, would of itself shew that no former disease can be unlikely to befal us, no former precautions can be unnecessary. And surely he who knows his own

heart, and to what temptations he is liable, which, he may guess with tolerable confidence, are not very different from those which beset the age, will find this one, of being apt to substitute what is abstract for what is real, none of the least. For if we observe ourselves, and read History, we shall find that such a disposition is not incompatible with our extreme devotion to visible and sensible objects, but has always accompanied it. And do we see nothing in our Theology at this day to make us tremble, lest the same should come upon us which came upon our ancestors in the middle ages? There is less of Logic, indeed, less of anxious and earnest thought, but is there less of notionality, or more of life, than there was in the days of Duns Scotus and Aquinas? I hope there is; but it is a question, which, I think, only some very sanguine and benevolent Christian, or some magazine parasite of the age, could answer at once and decidedly in the affirmative. But if you see nothing in the aspect of the English religious world to excite your apprehensions, can you contemplate the new form of Gnosticism which is rising up in France under the ominous name of Ontology, and which has for its propounder and elucidator perhaps the ablest man in that country, and not perceive in what direction the mind of this age is tending? I believe a good man, who meditates upon such a result as, I believe, has arisen in the world, and will again arise, wherever the notion of an intellectual entity takes the place of faith in a living God, will be filled with more horror and amazement than if he had a vision of Temples rising all around him to Jupiter, Vishnu, or Moloch. "Life dies, death lives," is the only description applicable to the chaos, which a

nation becomes, when it is permitted in the righteous judgment of God to endure such a catastrophe. Wherefore, if we have any remnant of patriotism, any fear of God or love to man, let us not do any act, of which it may be said hereafter, 'This was one of those measures, which brought this dreadful woe upon us[d].'

The last subject of Logic has prepared the way for the few remarks which I have to make on the study of Physics. Bacon overturned the tyranny of Logic over physical science, we grant. But Bacon found Logic already deposed from its dominion over the studies of Humanity. That work had been accomplished by Luther and by our Reformers. And let any one compare the Novum Organon with the writings of Luther, and say whether he does not feel that the ideas of the one have so impregnated the mind of the other, that all his own discoveries are but the result of their working. In fact, this is no opinion of mine. Nearly all men seem by their language to hold it. We speak almost in common discourse of Hervey and Bacon, as kinsmen of Luther. I am only repeating what thousands, both plain men and philosophers, have said before me, when I affirm, that it was not possible for the veil to be taken from physical science, till it had first been withdrawn from moral science. And that for a very obvious reason, because the great act of superstition is to confound matter and spirit, the invisible and visible, and to confer upon the one the awe and glory which belongs to the other. How then can the true properties of any thing in nature be discovered, while it is invested with all these false properties, and all this imaginary sacredness? The

[d] See note at the end.

fact for which I contend, whatever the reason of it may be, was recognized some years ago in the Edinburgh Review, in an Article on Professor Stewart's History of Philosophy, which was attributed to Sir James Mackintosh. The relation between Luther and Bacon is there admitted and almost assumed; the same accomplished writer tracing also a connexion, which we are as little anxious to deny, between the notions of Locke and those of the Puritans among whom he was educated[e].

But common opinion and this unsuspected authority, seeing that they refer only to one chapter, though a vast chapter, in Philosophical History, cannot weigh so much as the testimony of Bacon himself, who surveyed the whole volume. And any testimony *of his* in our favour would certainly be an unprejudiced one; *for* no one is more willing, at times, to cast a slur upon moral philosophy; as when, for instance, in the preface to the Instauratio Magna, he maintains that Eve was tempted to transgress through desiring moral knowledge, instead of the pure unsophisticated knowledge of nature. Yet can you read either the Novum Organon itself, or still more the Advancement of Learning, without perceiving that false notions of Theology and Humanity, the pursuit of studies loosely and irregularly, without reference to an object, the piling them one upon another, to use his own simile,

[e] But this remark applies only to the Essay on the Human Understanding, with its practical commentaries, the Essay on Education and the Hints on the Conduct of the Understanding. As to the Essay on Government, Mr. Coleridge's assertion has never been denied, that he gained whatever in it his followers have not been compelled to abandon as untenable, not from the Puritans, but from Hooker.

like the Giants' hills, in hopes of climbing to Heaven by them, have been in all ages the great hindrances to physical science?

There is, however, one fact, which in appearance is very strongly against me. I mean, as my readers will easily imagine, the state of the Moors under the Abbassides. Let us consider this point, and if it also turns out in my favour, I shall consider my case sufficiently proved. The following striking passage from Gibbon will set the argument against me in a strong light. "But the Moslems deprived themselves of the principal benefits of a familiar intercourse with Greece and Rome, the knowledge of antiquity, the purity of taste, and the freedom of thought. Confident in the riches of their native tongue, the Arabians disdained the study of any foreign idiom. The Greek interpreters were chosen among their Christian subjects; they formed their translations sometimes on the original text, more frequently, perhaps, on a Syriac version, and *in the crowd of astronomers and physicians, there is no example of a poet, an orator, or even an historian* being taught to speak the language of the Saracens. The mythology of Homer would have provoked the abhorrence of those stern fanatics; they possessed in lazy ignorance the colonies of the Macedonians, and the provinces of Carthage and Rome; the heroes of Plutarch and Livy were buried in oblivion; and the history of the world before Mahomet was reduced to a short legend of the patriarchs, the prophets, and the Persian kings. Our education in the Greek and Latin schools may have fixed in our minds a standard of exclusive taste, and I am not forward to condemn the literature and judgment of nations, of whose language I am ignorant. Yet I *know* that the

classes have much to teach, and I *believe* that the orientals have much to learn, the temperate dignity of style, the graceful proportions of art, the forms of visible and intellectual beauty, the just delineation of character and passion, the rhetoric of narrative and argument, the regular fabric of epic and dramatic poetry. The influence of truth and reason is of a less ambiguous complexion. The philosophers of Athens and Rome enjoyed the blessings, and asserted the rights, of civil and religious freedom. Their moral and political writings might have gradually unlocked the fetters of Eastern despotism, diffused a liberal spirit of enquiry and toleration, and encouraged the Arabian sages to suspect that their caliph was a tyrant, and their prophet an impostor." Chap. 52. In this passage it seems to be asserted, that, in the dearth of all the studies of Humanity, the Moors nevertheless obtained no ordinary proficiency in Physics. I do not wish to get rid of a single syllable of the historian's fair and honest statement; for see how it really affects the question: these Moors had, it is confessed, a great knowledge in Algebra, considerable acquaintance with the ancient Geometry; they had, moreover, various instruments of observation, and the "land of the Chaldeans still afforded the same spacious level, the same unclouded horizon," as in ancient days. But, with all these helps and appliances, what progress did the Arabians make in the path of true science? None whatever. There were dreams in the long night of physical ignorance in papal Europe; the Copernian idea of the universe half dawned on some of the philosophers in the middle ages, as on some of their pagan predecessors. It *was* one speculation among a thousand. But to the sense-bound spirit of the Moor,

it never presented itself even as a vague speculation, a distant possibility. Hear Gibbon again: "From the reign of the Abbassides, to that of the grandchildren of Tamerlane, the stars, without the aid of *glasses*, were diligently observed, and the astronomical tables of Bagdad, Spain, and Sarmarcand, correct some minute errors, *without daring to renounce the hypothesis of Ptolemy, without advancing a step towards the discovery of the solar system.*" Can there be a more striking *experimentum crucis* of the question, a more decisive demonstration, that physical science cannot long survive the destruction or perversion of human studies?

Hitherto I have been occupied with setting out my principle; but there are a few current and popular notions unfavourable to my views, which, I know, will still retain an influence over the minds even of those who have assented to my general argument. It is fitting, therefore, that I should establish the correctness of that principle, by shewing that these objections derive their force, from the ignorance or forgetfulness of it. The first that I shall notice is the complaint, that conditions of thought are not in fact a security for manly study; that the body which possesses them is in this merit far below other bodies, as, for instance, the University of Cambridge, and the Universities in Germany, which dispense with them.

It cannot have escaped any reader, that, while I have spoken of conditions of thought as a preservative against certain evils, to which students are exposed, I have yet spoken of these evils as actually existing in the University of Oxford. This is a parodox and in-

consistency, no doubt, and it is one which I am bound to justify. I can justify it, alas! too satisfactorily. I have said that conditions of thought are intended to be used as guides in our studies. From what I know of Oxford, I fear they are but rarely so used. I have said that these conditions of thought are intended to mark out the end for which our studies are to be pursued; the attainment of truth, and the cultivation of a large and catholic Humanity. I fear that the majority are not keeping this end in sight. In saying so, I feel myself much more a criminal than a judge; but when the question is, whether precious institutions, or our own reputation in this age, should be sacrificed, I cannot hesitate: I cannot doubt that the cowardly liberal compliment, 'We do not blame you, we blame the system,' should be indignantly repelled by each one of us, with an *Adsum qui feci*.

Why we neglect to *use* Articles for which we are ready enough to *fight*, is a deeply interesting question, to which I do not feel myself competent to give a complete answer. Speaking from what I have seen and experienced, I should be inclined to mention two reasons as the most weighty. The first is the habit of proposing University honours to ourselves as the great benefit of study. I do not concern myself with the question, whether it is right or wrong to propose these rewards. They are certainly no part of our ancient University system, nor, I confess, do I see any means of reconciling them with the principle of it. But further than this, I do not venture to speak.

It may have been necessary to make these innovations from circumstances with which I am not acquainted; the "pressure from without" is said to have been strong at the time they were adopted, and

the motives for yielding to it, and introducing a worldly leaven into University legislation and morality, may have been very cogent; I would only speak of what I have observed as to the effect on those who have entered into the spirit of the present system, and still more on those, a majority I believe among really diligent students, who cannot quite yield to it, or to the principles of a former age. Restlessness; want of any feeling of connexion in their studies; a habit of 'getting up' book after book for an examination, with a very faint apprehension of any other purpose for reading them; a growing incapacity for perceiving any objects in life but such as are visible and tangible; these habits of mind, most happily counteracted, and sometimes wholly overcome by sound principles early ingrafted and kept alive by those very institutions which they felt to be most irksome, have served to sow the fruits of this seeking of gifts and following after rewards. And hence there has arisen, I think, a darkness respecting Articles, and their use; because those who are never launching into an open sea of discovery, but always coasting in creeks and shallows, do not feel that they need charts or compasses, but rather are disposed to throw them overboard.

The other course which I have noticed is a feeling among Oxford young men, that mere scholastic education has something in it which disqualifies for the service of the world: by which notion some are tempted to adopt affectations of the nineteenth century, and to neglect their studies; others, to set up for idolaters of a former period, and to affect contempt for every thing which is modern. This notion I have therefore been particularly anxious to fight against in this pamphlet, by shewing that one who is really trained

according to the old discipline of the University, will be far better fitted than any of those, whom the age is bringing up in its own training schools and gymnasia, to cope with all the particular questions by which men at this day are vexed, and to cast light upon them. For surely to be carried backwards and forwards by all the eddies of public opinion, is not the best way of coming to understand what that opinion is, and of learning to govern it. This knowledge is to be gotten in silence and quietness of mind, such as that which was cultivated by the old prophets whom God taught in solitude to apprehend the conditions of their countrymen, and to be the wisest and noblest politicians that the world has ever seen.

But it is further urged, we not only do not see truth followed with a single eye at Oxford, where *Theological* Articles are put forth; but we do find that she is sought after earnestly in places where they are not put forth—in Cambridge, for instance, and the German Universities.

Now as to Cambridge, I fully admit in the first place that it has *as a body* recognised the principle against which I have been contending in this pamphlet, and actually substituted a Declaration of conformity for a Subscription to Articles. If this point be considered, it will be seen that it does not make against my case at all, but for it. The main intention of Cambridge thought has been towards Mathematical and Physical Studies. Should we not therefore have expected that the University would do just what we see it has done, viz. misunderstand the nature of those Articles, and not perceive that they are conditions of thought, seeing that for the studies uppermost in Cambridge minds they are *not* conditions of thought?

It took the Articles to be what they clearly are not, because, for an obvious reason, it could not perceive what they are.

But, secondly, it is not true that Cambridge (if by Cambridge is meant the *lecturers*) is without Articles. All teachers must have subscribed to them. And if the other lectures at Trinity resemble those of Mr. Evans, even in the shape of direct theological instruction, the Articles are as much imposed in this, not perhaps the most theological College in Cambridge, as in Oxford. So far then, the only difference between the two Universities would seem to be, that in Cambridge, the conditions of thought are not stated to the students at their entrance. In this point of view I have already shewn, I think, that the Oxford course is at once more straight forward, more respectful to the student, and more favourable to the interests of science.

But, thirdly, I am not inclined to deny, that while the exclusive *nonconformist* notion of Articles, which I have been exposing in this pamphlet, prevails to so great an extent, as it evidently does prevail, even in high quarters, there will be great *accidental* advantages accruing to an University, which, acting in general on the principles of the Articles, does not impose them. I am not disposed to deny that there has been a freedom, and energy, and manliness of thought at Cambridge, a courageous grappling with difficulties, and a zealous pursuit after truth, which Oxford may reasonably envy[f]. I have never attempted to deny

[f] It is quite consistent with what I have already maintained about Oxford, if I add, that I believe that Cambridge has produced *more* men of refined scholarship and refined Humanity, because *all* the honours of the University have, till of quite late years, taken another direction.

that the notion of imposing Articles as terms of communion, while it destroys all true idea of spiritual fellowship, and reduces that body which has ever been the great witness for an universal Church to the level of a sect, and injures personal devotion, does at the same time enfeeble and degrade the intellect. But then I contend, that this circumstance is merely accidental; that it has nothing whatever to do with the real principle of imposition, and has been the product of that sectarian spirit, which is destroying the vitals of every ecclesiastical institution; and therefore, fourthly, I can, in perfect consistency with this admission of the superiority, which, in certain important qualities of the heart and intellect, Cambridge has held over Oxford, contend that Cambridge would be very much the better, if her sons were subjected to the same severe and *manly* conditions of thought, to which every student at Oxford consents. I cannot speak with indifference, far less with reproach, of a University which I have every reason to revere and love; but I would appeal to the consciences of some who are best able to pronounce a verdict on the subject, and are least liable to be warped by prejudice in giving it. The most earnest and truth seeking men I have ever known, or I believe could be found any where, have grown up in that University; men, I believe, as incapable of being separated from that Mistress by worldly considerations, or fear of man, as any of those who have suffered and bled for her sake. Now I would ask them, whether, in looking back upon their University career, and the years which succeeded it, they do not call to mind periods of strife and wayward ness, of dark despondency and unsettled hope; whether they are not conscious to themselves of hav-

ing had, not for a while only, but for years together, aimless thoughts and vague purposes, which made them often inclined to curse, instead of to bless, that place of their early training, which, now that they can look calmly back upon it, and estimate its total effect upon their character, has part, I am well persuaded, in their strongest affections, and provokes some of their most solemn thanksgivings. I would ask such persons, whether there was not a conscious want in their minds of some directing authority, not to supersede indeed (for what words or letters can supersede?) the living voice of experienced friends, or the more awful teachings of the voice within, but yet stamped with a reverend majesty, of which the thousand vulgarities of daily life partly deprive the former, and which passion and restlessness hinder us from recognizing in the other.

Supposing there could have been such a guide through the mazes of past speculations, such a connecting link between those speculations and what was passing in their own hearts, such a friendly guide and monitor, in the shape of an ancient document, drawn up by considerate and holy men; I ask them, would this have been a bondage? would it have shackled the freedom and energy of their spirits? would it have hindered one aspiration after the beautiful and the good? would it not rather have delivered them from what, even then, they felt were restraints to that freedom, were checks upon those aspirations? would it not have shewn them their way through many mists, which hid from them the palace to which their steps were bound, and have preserved them from pressing many a will o' the wisp, which drew them wholly out of the road to it? That such

a document should be contained in those Thirty-nine Articles, which were associated in their minds with large wigs, afternoon slumbers, and a hatred of all youthful eagerness and hope, would indeed have seemed to them most extraordinary; but if they remember that at the same time newspapers and magazines, the periodical literature of the day, appeared to them in the light of friends and deliverers, though they now know that to have any respect or devotion for these, is only another name for being in the most ignominious vassalage to the vulgar notions and superstitions of the age; they may perchance think with themselves, that as their predilections were hastily and ignorantly adopted, so also may have been their aversions. And if this preparatory indisposition of mind be removed, which, while it lasts, will of course hinder them from judging any question fairly, I have little doubt that in their present state of mind, hoping more earnestly and confidently than ever that they themselves and their brethren will be guided into all truth, but chastened and humbled by the discovery that they never will obtain it unless they are guided by an Almighty hand, and finding that all means and schemes and appliances are not scorned by that Wise Teacher, but are pressed into His service, they will discover, that these Articles do fulfil, better than any production of the same kind which past ages have bequeathed to us, that office of a safety lamp, of which, even in their more inexperienced years, when they first descended into the mines of human thought, they felt that they had need.

But I must turn to the German Universities, on which I will be very brief, having anticipated some of my observations in speaking of Cambridge. Throughout it has been my endeavour to shew, that freedom

of the spirit, which is the thing most necessary to man,—the free exercise of the reason, and, subordinately to it, of every faculty and affection which has been given to man,—is another thing altogether from that which is so often mistaken for it, freedom of speculation. I do not mean that the latter, so far as it implies the absence of legislative fetters, is not closely connected with the former; but I mean, that when a man indulges his intellect to all the freaks to which it is inclined, he is not in the way to be a freeman, but he is in the way to become a slave. I do not confine my remark to the imagination. I know that it wants restraints and laws, and many severe restraints and laws, in order to its manly exercise; but so also does the hard, dry intellect, nor will it ever do the work for which it was given, and for which we need it, unless it has learnt to endure government. Now I contend that the intellect of the Germans is not one whit too vigorous, not one whit too actively exercised; but I contend that it is not exercised under those conditions, which enable it to move with true and manly freedom, and in harmony with all the other faculties. I am very anxious to make this remark, because it is sometimes said, both by the friends and the enemies of the German nation, that they pursue knowledge for knowledge sake, that this is their virtue or their infirmity. Now I cannot perceive, that pursuing knowledge for knowledge sake, if by knowledge is meant *truth*, the object of knowledge, can ever be a charge against any one. But what I complain of in the Germans is, that the pleasure of the art of knowing, in them, entirely supersedes the consideration of the object. It is with them so mightily pleasant a thing to be always

asking Pilate's question, "What is truth?" that I confess I am unable to perceive that they care particularly for a reply, or are thoroughly persuaded that one is possible. No one can accuse them of wanting zeal, nor a certain degree of moral fairness; they are disposed to look at evidence on a great many sides, perhaps on every side, but they forget that evidence is to prove something; they forget that things are before they are known, and that in the spiritual just as little as in the material world does the knowledge constitute the reality, though by the knowledge we are made partakers of it. A sense that something has been done, something has been proved in the world, before he came into it; a feeling that he is walking under a firmament of truths, which actually are, though they will be nothing to him unless he enters into personal and real acquaintance with them; this, it seems to me, would be most salutary, most cheering, most invigorating, to a young German student. It would not quench his ardour for truth, it would only give it manliness and direction; it would take away his self-conceit and not his courage; it would give him a sense of reality, of which he is now destitute. Of course I do not take upon myself to pronounce that Berlin and Göttingen ought to adopt our Thirty-nine Articles into their course of instruction; national character and circumstances require different treatment, and some of the Articles have clearly a national character, which would make them ridiculous any where else; nor do I know that, except the faith of the Germans were first called out by creeds and forms of worship, propository Articles of any kind, even struck, as they doubtless ought at all events to be, in a native and not a foreign mint,

would not rather confirm than check some of their evil tendencies. But I leave the circumstances of Germany to her own patriots, of whom, I trust, she has yet many. All I am anxious for is, that we should not suffer our own national institutions, in the right understanding and right use of which I see the best hopes of England, the best hopes of our future growth and progress, to be sacrificed to our imitation of the Germans. And such an evil may be feared from two causes. First, from the natural admiration, in earnest and affectionate minds, of what seems so congenial in German thought and literature; and, secondly, from the inadequacy of our popular philosophy and, it may be feared, of our popular theology to meet the powers which they are bringing into play.

I pass on to another objection which is constantly brought against the use of Articles, and which persons of most opposite religious opinions combine to urge. Their watchword is the celebrated phrase of Chillingworth, "The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants:" the great *argumentum ad hominem* in its defence, our own eighth Article. If the Scripture contain all things necessary to salvation, whence the need of Articles? The direct question contained in these words I have already replied to more than once. Articles, as such, contain nothing necessary to salvation. But I am not ignorant that the feeling, ill-defined and not able to express itself in words, yet floats about men's minds—Articles do in some sort interfere with the reverence which we owe to the Scriptures. I believe it is in the main an honest feeling, and that it ought to be fairly encountered. I would in the first place remark, that the objection is applied equally to two kinds of compositions, which I

have shewn to be essentially distinct in their nature: to Creeds, that is, the professions of personal faith in God; and to Articles, which are merely intellectual propositions. With the first I have, properly speaking, nothing to do on the present occasion, but yet as the notions are confused in the minds of the objectors, I will not refuse an answer to either. With respect to Creeds, then, the objection is founded upon this strange notion, that it is not the things revealed, which are the objects of our faith, and the bonds of our fellowship, but that it is the revelation, or rather the mere book recording or containing the revelation. Now a notion more dangerous than this,—one tending more deeply to pharisaical idolatry and superstition, and that slavish reverence for letter and words, with which our Lord, when on earth, and His Apostles sustained a more difficult conflict, than with almost any other evil tendency of the human heart,—a notion leading more straight from superstition to indifference, from indifference to atheism,—was never concocted or devised. Either the Bible reveals something, or nothing; if it reveals something, it is that something which we want to know, it is that something which it signifies to us to know. Is that something expressible? can one man set it before another? How should he set it before another? In music? In painting? By some undiscovered method of communication between eye and eye? But if in words, those words form a Creed, twist yourself as you please to escape from a name; it is the name and the only name that can be given to those words. What the nature of the creed should be, is, I confess, a most important question. Here I go all lengths with the objector in contending for plainness and simplicity; but the

terms plainness and simplicity must be understood. In one sense the system of Ptolemy is vastly more plain than the system of Newton. It commends itself directly to the senses, but the misfortune is, it does not explain the phenomena; it is exceedingly likely and uncommonly sensible, but it tells us nothing. I want a revelation to tell me who God is, how He is made known to me, by what means I may have fellowship with Him. If the Bible tells me this, the Bible tells me what I want to know; if it stops short of this, it is not the revelation I look for; if it tells me this, I can set down what it tells me; the simplest form in which I set it down is the best, provided I do actually set down what has been revealed. That our Creed, the Creed which has been in use in the Church for seventeen or eighteen centuries, does fulfil these conditions, we are prepared to shew, and so long as it fulfils them, we shall contend for its use in the Church, as a homage to the Bible, not an offence to it; and to drive it from the Church on any such ground, would be to say, the Bible is indeed a stupendous book, a most perfect revelation, the only authority, but it imparts no knowledge, it does not contain a single truth which is apprehensible by man.

But propository Articles, it is said, interfere with the Scripture of truth, if personal Creeds do not. What is the suppressed premiss here? What is the real reason why propository Articles are supposed to interfere with the Bible? Because the Bible itself is supposed to be a set of propository Articles. This great fiction, this monstrous insult to the Divine word, has gained ground most extensively in the Protestant Church, and was never more in fashion

than in the present day. A more striking defence of Articles than this cannot be produced; those who will not submit their minds to the conditions of thought which grave men, practised in their own hearts and in the history of the world, have composed for their assistance, in order to deliver them out of the notions and superstitions that are natural to their own mind, and which are growing up all around them, these men so find the *want* of such Articles, such conditions of thought, that they turn the book of God, which was written for no such purpose, into a set of formal propositions. And thus it comes to pass, that all the mighty schemes of Providence,—all the development of a nation's life through different stages of its history,—all the actual growth of the nation out of the family, of the church out of the nation,—all the living, practical records, by which man is made known to himself, to his brother man, and by which God is made known to him,—all the plan of education which God hath pursued to bring man to a knowledge of Himself, and which is set down with such marvellous order and accuracy in that book,—all this is forgotten, and thrown overboard by those, who nevertheless claim for *the Bible* the worship which *it* claims for God. Under pretence of magnifying the words of Scripture, they destroy the very letter of the book; they will not take plain words to mean words, and acts to mean acts. Every thing is to be sacrificed in order that the book may be converted into a framework of notions and propositions.

And here I may add, that I conceive no mistake lays so open to the assaults of Neologism and Rationalism, as that which I am now attacking. The notion

that the Bible is a collection of articles of faith, or logical propositions, and that the way of determining religious controversies is by balancing sentence against sentence, under pretence of doing homage to the word of God, and the notion which is built upon this, that the Bible is therefore to supersede all propository Articles and conditions of thought, is that which gives Neologism its great popularity. For it is impossible that any set of men who will speak of Moses, as if he were a legislator; of David, as if he were a king; of Paul, as if he were really a man of flesh and blood; and facts, as if they were facts; it is impossible, I say, that any such man, be his theories what they may, shall not gain ground in the common sense and feelings of mankind, against those who deal with the Bible, as if between it and all the other books in the world, there existed no link or connection whatsoever; as if its *doings* were all mysterious and imaginary, and its *words* alone possessed a magical virtue. The common sense and honesty, and, I will add, the religion of men's minds, revolt against such a system, with whatever pretences of reverence for an inspired writing, and denunciations against those who may venture to question its wisdom, it may be guarded. Men who are in earnest must have reality at any price; they will sacrifice even reverence to obtain it: there is an air of reality about the Neological writers; and if persons are not made acquainted with the necessities of their own minds, that air of reality will pass for reality itself.

For the sake of the honour of the Bible then; most especially that it may be preserved in its true and real character as the record of the ways of

God to man;—that it may become to us, what it has never yet sufficiently been made, not only the interpreter of our own thoughts, and the acting of our individual minds, but the interpreter of the workings of society, the key to unlock the treasures which are hid in the literature of all nations and languages;—that we may not defeat the purposes for which God has given the precious gift to the world, under pretext of doing it honour;—let not Articles be abolished from a fancy that the Bible supplies their place, but let them remain as strong and hardy conditions of thought, to discipline men's minds to the worthy and humble exposition of it, enabling us to dispel the mists which the proud, darkened, sense-bound spirit of man is always raising about these seven-times purified words of wisdom and truth.

Another objection takes the following form: 'Your University,' it is said, 'is composed of two classes, one intended for the Church and the other for different professions. With respect to the first, these Articles are far too elaborate and learned. Clergymen, if they are good for any thing, ought to be preachers to the multitude; they are to set before them simple truths revealed to simple understandings. It is very mischievous that such persons should be taught to look upon theology as so complicated and refined; it is the cause of the great indifference of the people to the clergy, the great cause of their frequenting Methodist chapels; the abolition of the Articles will do a great deal towards giving us simple preachers. And as to the other professions, these Articles have nothing whatever to do with them. If you have proved that they have something to do with logic and rhetoric, you have only found that lawyers and physi-

cians do not want logic and rhetoric; and yet, besides requiring a Subscription to Articles at entering the University, you require one at leaving it; as if these conditions of thought had something to do with the plain business of life to which they are then about to devote themselves.'

I shall take these objections in order. First, as to preaching. We want a simple ministry, a set of men who will set truths in a simple form before the people. Granted. It is what the country wants, what it most earnestly desires; it is that commodity with which she expects the Universities to furnish her. I will go further; I will confess that we have not such a supply of this commodity as we want, that there is in a great portion of English preachers (of course there are some glorious exceptions) a want of that power by which Luther and the Reformers in Germany, and Latimer and the Reformers in England, commended their words to the minds of a people, certainly not better instructed than the agricultural and manufacturing population of England at the present day; but the question is, whence comes the evil? how may it be remedied? It comes, say the objectors, from the notion that Theology is so complicated and intricate a study, a notion which the Thirty-nine Articles mightily help to confirm. Now in what sense do the Articles lead us to suppose that Theology is an intricate study? That they lead us to consider the knowledge of God the highest and deepest knowledge which men can enjoy, the sum of all knowledge, that in which alone knowledge finds its full and satisfactory meaning, this is true; that they teach us that by nature the heart and mind of man are averse from this knowledge, this also is true; but with all this they

teach us, and that in the plainest language, that this knowledge is attainable by the poorest man in the land, and that it is his right and inheritance. In what sense then do they still declare Theology an intricate study? They declare that a thousand and ten thousand superstitions and darknesses have started up in the natural understanding, to becloud the truth and hinder its manifestation to men; they make us feel that these errors which have come up under different forms, in each age, have so certainly their roots in the evil nature of man, that they are sent to reproduce themselves, and can by no human possibility become extinct. Now here are two ways in which they represent Theology as difficult. It is difficult to attain the knowledge of God and to serve Him, because the world, and the flesh, and the devil are against it. There is a moral and spiritual difficulty common to all men, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, in no wise greater to one than to another. And again, it is difficult to know all the paths and windings of error in the human heart, how they run into each other, how they have affected men in all ages; this is an intellectual, as well as a moral and spiritual difficulty. To learn this, is the part of the minister or teacher; for this, he becomes a student in Theology; whilst pursuing this, if he does not mistake his vocation, he finds that numerous other studies become a part of Theology. The question then at issue is this, Are the Articles right or wrong, in affirming the existence of multitudinous errors and superstitions? Are they right or wrong in affirming that these errors and superstitions, when they have gained ground in a land, have made the knowledge of God impossible, and thereby have destroyed all morality, all national

and political righteousness? Are they wrong in affirming that these superstitions have reproduced themselves in the human heart, and ever will reproduce themselves? If they are not, then is ministerial simplicity destroyed by these superstitions, or by the knowledge that they exist? Are the people hindered from finding truth by their tendency to these superstitions, or by having a minister who knows whence they will arise or how to check them? This is the reason of the case. Now let us look at the facts. I spoke of the Reformers making their way to the hearts of men, and having been enabled to present truth to them, with a life and power which we do not discern in modern preaching. Were these Reformers trained in a less severe intellectual discipline than we are? or was their discipline tenfold more stern, more scholastic than ours? The objector supposes that scholastic discipline inevitably leads to scholastic preaching; a greater mistake cannot be imagined. It is perfectly true that the preaching of the seventeenth century was insufferably, intolerably scholastic, not because the preachers were more severely educated than in the former age, for I think it may be easily shewn, that their logic, though more obtrusive, was far less subtle than that of their predecessors, but because in that age devotional forms were disregarded, Creeds and Liturgies were esteemed a bondage, and therefore Articles became all in all, the meat, drink, and clothing of the soul[a].

[a] But there were in that age simple preachers. A beautiful story is told of that profound and erudite scholar, Pococke. A deputation from the parliamentary commissioners, appointed to report against malignants and sequester livings, came into his parish. Meeting

But there are other ways, in which it is possible to deviate from simplicity, besides that of being scholastic. Abstract phraseology, whatever persons may think, is at least as unintelligible to the common people as learned phraseology. In abstract phraseology I include every word that has not a sensible exponent; all those words with which one finds every Scotch treatise and nearly every Scotch sermon abound; all those words which one does not find in Homer, Shakespeare, or the authorized translation of the Bible.

Now if a person like William Cobbett is conversant with nothing but outward and sensible matter, such a man, having a masculine understanding, and the good sense never to depart from the language of the class in which he has been bred, will undoubtedly express himself in a clear manly Saxon style. And so also

with an honest rustic, one of his flock, they endeavoured, by various leading questions, to discover some grounds of impeachment against the episcopal clergymen, if not for offences in life, at least for error in doctrine, or at any rate for substituting profane learning for Christianity. The answer was most distressing. 'No,' said the countryman, 'I dare say our parson would'nt do for the great folk, *he arnt much of a Latiner*, but he tells us about Jesus Christ, and the things we simple people like to hear of.' I can supply a modern pendant to this story. A certain worthy maker of rush chair bottoms was employed by some well-disposed persons to preach to some villagers in the south of England. There was danger, to be sure, that his statements might be occasionally confused; and some little, that his own piety might suffer from such a display; but then it was all important, that the people should have a simple gospel, and a simple gospel such a simple man was sure to preach. A person who had patronized him, going to hear one of his sermons, addressed to a set of south country boors, was somewhat astonished to hear the mender of chair bottoms discoursing respecting *Socrates* and *Plato!*

the poor husbandman, who does concern himself with spiritual things, brings forth out of the treasure which his keen observant eye has accumulated, things new and old, which will be cast into an English *mint* and will come out sterling coin. But if a person becomes in any way conversant with technical phrases of Christianity—if he gets any sort of intellectual acquaintance with it—I apprehend he must carry that intellectual acquaintance a good way, he must subject his mind to severe discipline, if he would escape the temptation of abstract language, and adopt that which is alone within the reach of common understandings, I had nearly said, the only language which conveys an actual bonâ fide meaning to any understandings. Accordingly we find, I believe, this abstract language no where more rich and flourishing than in the sermons of popular dissenting ministers. Of course precisely the same observation will apply, for precisely the same reason, to those Clergymen who have not thought it worth their while to cultivate their understandings, thinking that a pious disposition, with a little knack at composition, is sufficient for a preacher of the word. Such persons, I must maintain, be they called what they will, are not simple preachers; they may never deviate from a certain track, which has been marked out for them; they may never go out of the road of their own experience, or a few favourite books; and thus they may easily persuade themselves that they are simple, and make it a point of habitual complaint against others that they are not so: but the question is, how much of what they actually say is apprehended; how much passes alive into the minds of those who hear them; how much which appears pleasantly and softly to trickle in, soon becomes

hardened into an ice of habitual doctrinalism, which the awakened spirit on a death bed would give all the world that it could break through.

One of the first things which our conditions of thought rightly perused admonish a student is of the perils of phraseology; there is enough in every page of ecclesiastical history, unfolded and interpreted to him by the accurate compilers of these Articles, to make him tremble every time he takes an abstract word into his lips, lest he should be substituting a sound, or a mere logical conception, for the realities of the Gospel. Such a man will be compelled to try his own use even of the most regular watchword and symbols of religious writings, by a severe test. This peril to simplicity then—the use of abstract language—is, I think, more likely to be escaped by him who has been brought up under the discipline, than by him who has not.

I have alluded to abstract phraseology; another foe, I apprehend, to simplicity in modern preaching is commercial and forensic phraseology, and a commercial habit of thinking. Let any one compare our sermons with those of the age of the Reformers. In that period, as well as in the primitive ages of Christianity, men looked upon the relationships of father, brother, husband, king, as steps of a ladder which connect earth with heaven; their relationships were considered the direct means of leading men upwards into spiritual truth, and language drawn from them, the grandest and the safest that could be adopted for communicating the knowledge of God to man. Illustrations and metaphors taken from the material transactions of society, were not declined; they, as well as all nature and all art, were laid under

contribution, and brought not unwillingly into the service of the sanctuary; but they were the border and the tracery, not the groundwork. Such, it seems to me, was the form of theological thought and theological instruction at the time our Articles were composed. Commerce was at that time in its infancy; now, it appears to have brought every thing within its enchanted circle, and nothing seems to have done it more homage than our sermons and our theology. Jeremy Taylor, in his Sermon on the Marriage Ring, thought it necessary to remind those to whom he preached, that the words 'marriage,' and 'union,' as applied to the mystical relation between the invisible Head of the body and its members, were *not* terms of art. That great man perceived that these ideas were gradually becoming less and less substantial in men's minds, nay, perhaps, he felt that even to himself they had not all the clearness and power, with which they were realized by the glorious company of the Apostles," and "the noble army of martyrs." In his day that Batavian theology had already invaded England, which has since well nigh made our own pure English writers, as well as the men of the ancient Church, unintelligible to us. By Batavian theology, I mean that which, whether it appears in the form of Grotianism, or Witsianism, takes the ideas of commerce as the foundation of spiritual meditation, and the ideas of relationship, as only auxiliary and ornamental metaphors,—the theology which would expound such a passage as this, "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands," by the notion of a bargain or a covenant, instead of using these passages as clearing up and satisfying the preparatory, and confessedly imperfect views respecting agreements and covenants, which the elder

dispensation, not however without a continual reference and homage to other and sublimer views, had disclosed. I do not at present enter into the question how their commercial conceptions of theology, and those hundred conceptions which are drawn from the practice of our law courts, have affected the life and soul of Christianity among us. I do not enquire whether the substitution of such thoughts for those which are connected with relationship, be any ways connected with that indifference to these relationships, which all admit prevails among us, and which sometimes does put on the pretence of religion itself. I shall not even enquire, except in the way of casual notice when I come to the next objection, whether this change has any thing to do with the divisions and strifes among us; whether carnal and earthly conceptions of Christianity may not be one source of carnal and earthly strifes among Christians: these are subjects of grave and awful consideration; but these must be reserved for another opportunity. The point I am now dealing with is that of simplicity; it is said that our Articles and the scholastic education which is connected with them, hinder our preachers from being simple. I fling back the charge in the face of the objector, and tell him, that it is the want of attention to these Articles, the want of using them as conditions of thought, and prosecuting a theological education with their assistance, the want of such a brave and diligent study as would deliver the mind from the bondage of coarse, grovelling, trade notions, which makes our popular preachers, whether in the Church or among Dissenters, so much the reverse of simple, so very unintelligible to the mass of the people. Oh! then for the sake of simplicity, of good old English

simplicity, of good old Christian simplicity, and not that which bears the name in our day,—the simplicity which is only another name for every thing artificial and unreal,—let us see to it that we purge our minds at the Universities of this commercial leaven, which unquestionably will mix up with all thoughts and feelings, if we leave our minds to the influence of the age and society around us. Nothing can save us but hardy conditions of thought, nothing but a reverence for those forms which were drawn up in times, when theology was not borrowed from commerce, or from jurisprudence, but when commerce and jurisprudence themselves derived their life and sustenance from theology.

This last remark brings me to the latter part of the objection. Other professions, it is said, at least have nothing to do with theological Articles. The argument on this part is a long one; and as I have already defended the Articles as necessary to studies which not in England only, but in every civilized country, are deemed necessary, on some grounds or other, for the education of a gentleman, I may be excused from doing more than just stating the positions which, did my limits permit, I would undertake to prove. If they awaken thought, one great part of my object will be answered. I would endeavour to shew, that, with respect to lawyers, the most important ideas of jurisprudence, not those which belong to archæological controversies, but those with which they are conversant every day in ordinary practice, are ideas which nothing but theology can unfold and interpret. Most of our lawyers, even those whose political tendencies are towards Benthamism, when they have become a little conversant with their profession, resent and ridicule the attempts of the Benthamites, to get

rid of all legal forms and fictions, because they cannot instantly discover for what use they were intended. These lawyers discover by practice, that the secret and inwoven operations of nature may be condemned on the same ground, and on precisely the same reason. But I think it will be admitted on all hands, that these practical lawyers may at times uphold the most important legislative principles, and the most really trivial legislative errors, through an incapacity of distinguishing the one from the other, and the sober fear, while conscious of that incapacity, lest they should sacrifice either. Now I would endeavour to shew, that, had they been thoroughly grounded and indoctrinated in principles which belong to a higher science than of mere positive law, great part of this incapacity would be removed, and they would acquire a habit of perceiving when forms and practices, for which there is no assignable motive of expediency, have a groundwork in the principles of society and humanity, and when they are merely the outgrowth of foolish and hasty legislation, or have been preserved after the reasons for them have passed away.

The modern professors of Medicine have saved me the trouble of demonstrating, that there is a connexion between their science and Theology. The labours of a part of these to cut off the link, are the best proofs of its existence. I should, however, had I time, enter into this argument also, for the purpose, amongst others, of shewing that freedom of enquiry, and even the toleration of dangerous opinions, are not hindered but promoted by the use of conditions of thought. A person whose son comes up raw and inexperienced from the country, to enter our modern schools of anatomy, might well be frightened at opening Mr.

Lawrence's Lectures, and finding how much of that faith, to which he had trusted for his preservation through the perils of youth, might be undermined by attendance on a course of physiological studies. But a parent whose son had been well disciplined with theological conditions of thought, need be under no such apprehension, need have no wish on any personal grounds that such lecturers should be silenced; not because the son would come up with resolute prejudice to stop his ears against every materialist insinuation, but because he would have so well comprehended beforehand the meaning of materialism, and whereabouts it enters into the sphere of human thought, and how it acts; because he would have discovered, long before he entered upon this course, that every superstition which has ever darkened the mind, has had its rise in materialism, either modifying spiritual truth, or coming forth in its own nakedness; and, lastly, because he would so well have understood the grounds of the question upon the study of which he was entering, that he would be in a condition to avail himself of all his teacher's practical information, without being affected by his theories, otherwise than with diversion at the pretence to originality which they put forth, or with sorrow at the unhappy abuse of words which stamps with the name of *free*, opinions which he knows from history have been the great enslavers of all feeling and energy.

And though no doubt the priest-taught student may be for a time contemned by his liberal associates, yet his sacerdotal knowledge, odious as it is, enabling him to look theories in the face, which their teachers have been used to divulge with a wink and a solemn shake of the head, and enabling him moreover to look

phenomena and facts in the face, which neither those teachers nor their pupils dare to confront, it must needs be regarded as something rather convenient, and not wholly despicable, however shocking and bigotted the ways in which he came by it.

Lastly, for the Statesman. Since under the head of History I have already spoken concerning him, my chief object would be to shew the application of theological conditions of thought to the questions, which are exercising him not as a general student, but at this particular crisis of our history,—questions, which he must discuss, if he shut himself up ever so much in mere practical details. Thus, for instance, I would endeavour to shew, that the man whose mind has been trained and exercised by theological conditions of thought, and has pursued the studies with which they are connected, can alone with a free and honest spirit enter upon the questions which rise out of Mr. Malthus' Essay on Population. He will, I conceive, find a set of facts, set forth in strong battle array, out of which Mr. Malthus adduces a conclusion which he calls a law. These facts his opponents, who see in his conclusion something hostile to the benevolence of nature, as they call it, do not like to examine. Now he, who is instructed and warned by these theological Articles, knows first of all that facts are facts, and that all the subtleties of human wit can never get rid of them. But he knows, secondly, from the same theological conditions of thought, that to deduce a law which governs a number of human beings, from the most satisfactory collection of facts respecting them, is not a safe method, for the simple reason that the majority of those persons are living anomalously. To admit that it is true of

the multitude, or mass of human creatures, that they will certainly gratify their instincts to a degree which is unfavourable to their happiness,—this he can easily and freely admit: but to say that this is then a law: this he will not admit; for the obedience to those instincts is, he has been instructed, in rebellion against the law of their being; he has been taught, that man acting according to law, is the lord over the instincts of his nature, and that man submitting to these instincts, and being led by them, has broken loose from his law,—is fallen into slavery. Now the difference, which may at first seem merely a formal distinction, is really connected with all the practical issue of the question. It shews us, in the first place, that no inference can be drawn against the benevolence of God, from the existence of any evil, which results not secondarily but primarily from resistance to His law. It shews, secondly, that no hopelessness about the state and prospects of man is justifiable on this ground,—unless there be no way for the restoration of man to the perfect state and law of his being. It shews, thirdly, that, from a nation be it ever so small, from a district be it ever so small, which is most submitting to the law which is meant for a man who is in the most virtuous state, we get the true idea of humanity, and not from a multitude of irregular cases, altogether unfit for experiment. And therefore he is warranted in concluding, on grounds of reason and experience both, that if there be any power to bring man into that state, as he believes there is, there will be nothing in any law of nature to resist, or counteract, or defeat his happiness, but that the earth will yet bring forth and bud, and the universe be brought to the state that was intended for it. Wherefore, with much thankfulness to Mr. Malthus for having made

known an important fact, and thereby shewn the inexpediency of many legislative measures, which before his time were accounted sage, the true statesman will yet utterly deny his pretensions to be the discoverer of a law, will gather no despondency from his speculations, and will feel that his own province of a legislator is still to look upon man as a moral being, and not to encourage him in warring against his physical condition.

But I pass on to the last objection which I shall notice. It may be expressed in some such words as these. 'After all your intellectual, and even your theological reasons for Subscription, you have not touched the great matter; there is one object more important to us as a nation and as a Church, than human knowledge, or even than theological knowledge. We are torn with divisions; we must have unity: any means that will reconcile men—any thing that will bring them together and make us once more a people at one among ourselves—is desirable, and we can scarcely purchase such a result too dearly; we must sacrifice feeling, utility, opinion, every thing to get unity.'

I have stated the case thus strongly, more strongly, perhaps, than almost any disputant would state it, because I desire to express entire and hearty concurrence in the sentiment. Even thus worded, I believe that opinion, feeling, utility, should be sacrificed for the sake of unity. I believe that sacrifices, enormous sacrifices, ought to be made in order to obtain it. I believe that the language of some excellent persons, who say, we must not give up truth for the sake of unity, though it contains a valuable meaning, is yet far less sound than it appears to be; for I see that truth is suffering every day and hour from the absence of unity.

I believe that wherever the spirit of unity is not, there neither can the spirit of truth be dwelling. If, then, it could be proved, that the removal of the Thirty-nine Articles from our Universities would tend to the reconciliation of parties, would be likely to remove stumbling blocks or divisions from the Church or from the nation, would heal one great breach in the Church of England, or would really bring the Dissenters into communion with her and with each other, I would say, without a moment's hesitation, all I have urged in their behalf is worth nothing; I care not how wise they are, how useful they may become; they stand in the way of a higher object—let them go. But it is because I believe that the removal of our Articles from the Universities would have no such effect; because I am convinced that it would not annihilate parties, nor in the least diminish their rancour against each other; that it would not be the means of establishing communion between Dissenters and Churchmen, or between the different classes of Dissenters; because I think I can shew that there are other real hindrances to unity which ought to be removed, other real sacrifices which ought to be made; and because I think that these Articles are exactly what prevent those great foes to unity and peace from prevailing more even than they do at present; because, lastly, I believe that these, rightly understood, would be the greatest helpers to unity, not only among ourselves, but also with those who have been separated from us; therefore do I cry out, Do not banish these Articles from our Universities; do not prohibit the youth of England from studying and using them far more effectually than they have done; do not abandon one of the best fortresses against the powers of

division and disunion and hatred which are abroad in the earth.

In using this language, it may be supposed that I intend to support the notion, so strenuously contended for by Bishop Burnet and others, that our Articles are Articles of peace. Now I will endeavour to explain in what sense I hold that opinion, and in what sense I entirely differ from it. That such an opinion should have prevailed so much in the Church, and that it should have numbered so many high authorities in its support, is *primâ facie* evidence that it has some foundation. But let any one read the Articles, and observe the studied, remarkable accuracy of the language, and the tone of decision which prevails throughout. Let him consider further the temper of mind which prevailed at that period, the energy, the intellectual vehemence which characterized all the *men of* that period, and our own Reformers amongst the rest, and ask himself whether he can believe, in deference to Bishop Burnet and all the authorities in the world, that they were written upon a scheme of conciliation and compromise. When did ever the words of any man belonging to the *juste milieu*, take such a form? He delights in generalities, he escapes into vagueness, he dares not denounce any thing, he dare not affirm any thing. He thinks A has a great deal to say for himself, and so has B; but *what* A has to say for himself, and *what* B has, he prudentially shrinks from declaring; and he is most pleased when, having deprived A's thoughts of all their life, and B's thoughts of all their life, he has succeeded in producing a dead residuum or deposit, to which all men lay equal claim, and to which the wise man willingly abdicates his claim altogether. It is not to

such divisions and apportionments of truth as these, that men such as our Reformers will submit. When the Solomons of the earth propose to divide the living child in twain, the pseudo-mother may indeed rejoice in so equitable an adjustment; but she who has toiled and travailed with it through many a night and day of anguish, has exulted in its birth and fed upon its smiles, will prove by her bitter cries, that to her any arrangement would be more tolerable than one which must put it to death.

But in what sense is it possible that Bishop Burnet, and others whom we would not willingly think wrong, may have been right? I answer, there are two methods of making peace, there are two methods of reconciliation. One is the method of him who keeps the *juste milieu:* he reconciles men by concentrating their weakness; all that is not decisive or positive in the opinion of either of the two parties he amalgamates into his own, leaving out only what is vital and energetic in each. He is half a Tory and half a Whig, that is to say, he has no politics at all; he is half an Arminian and half a Calvinist, that is to say, he has no theology at all.

But is it not possible to suppose a man who takes precisely the opposite course to this, and yet arrives at the same pacific and equitable result? Is it not possible to suppose a man, who believes that it is not the *negative* parts of each opinion which have most tendency to coalesce, but that the *positive* parts of these opinions are always struggling towards each other, and are kept apart only by the negative and contradictory elements with which they are mingled? Is it not possible for such a man to set out with a strong resolution and hope, that this good object, which he

has seen other kind hearted men labouring to effect, by a method against which all that is strong and energetic in man rebels, may be effected by another method, which satisfies what is strong and energetic, which affronts only what is disputatious and contradictory and hateful in man? Such a position, I believe, it is possible for man to take up; and he who has taken it up, and by God's grace means to maintain it, will, I think, begin to adopt Bishop Burnet's conclusion respecting our Articles, in a rather different sense from that which this worthy, but somewhat feeble and compromising prelate gave to it. Looking round on the state of practice in our day, he will say to himself, "There I see a set of men stoutly maintaining the Calvinistic hypothesis, and here is a set of men stoutly maintaining the one which is opposed to it. Between them I see a number of amiable persons, full of gentleness and goodnature, but wanting, as it appears to me, that stern and truth-loving spirit which I feel necessary to my own being, who will not adopt either view, but strive to shut their eyes to the whole question. Since I cannot sympathize with these, to which of those two opposing bodies shall I ally myself? Unwilling as I am to be half-hearted and indecisive, there is yet something in each which commends itself to my spirit, and something in each which continually disgusts me. I hear one descanting upon God's grace, and every thing that is fair on earth as the fruits of it,—and I am delighted. I hear the same party talk of sovereign grace in such a way as to leave the suspicion, that that Being, whom they have just described to me as the source of all good upon earth, is rather to be considered under the heathen notion of *a Power*,

exercising Mercy, than according to the scriptural view as *One who is Love, exercising Power*—and I am disgusted. I hear the other party singing joyful carols respecting the freedom of man,—and with heart and soul I join in them; but the next moment I hear them speaking as if that freedom were possible under conditions under which my reason and experience alike tell me that it never can be exercised, a condition of separation from the source of life and freedom,—and my heart sinks within me. I hear one speaking of the uselessness of all forms and constitutions and dispensations to a man, unless he punctually and for himself claim the benefit of them,—and I am delighted. I hear the same persons speaking as if there were no constitutions, no dispensation of which one can claim the benefit, as if faith created the benefits of which it availed itself,—and I despond. I hear the other speaking good tidings of an established harmony, a constituted order, intended for man as man, be there never so few who as yet understand what it means, and are admitted into it,—and I give thanks for such glorious truth. I hear the same persons contending that the act, by which I claim my birthright in an inheritance purchased long ago for my race by a dreadful agony, an act which, they admit, upon the largest view of its value, confers no certain portion of grace upon the unconscious subject, constitutes my title to this new and magnificent estate,—and I am lost in perplexity. But when I look further into these parties, I am struck with these phenomena. I find two classes of men in each, one delighting in the positive parts of their own creed, the other delighting in those which impugn the opinion of their adversaries. The distinction is clearly marked, though,

from the necessary mixture of human society and the weakness of men's hearts, they are confounded, and the former now and then assume the garb of the latter. With one of these classes in either party, I find I can hold happy communion; with the other class in both parties, none whatever. I may admire their adroitness in special pleading, their clever taunts, their well managed ridicule, in a word their skilful use of all the weapons which Christians have filched out of the world's armoury; but to think with them, or feel with them, is impossible;—their pleasure is, to think and to feel against other men, not with any.

"But then may it not be, that all those opinions which strike me as so painful, so contradictory to those which I was just before admiring and sympathizing in, may it not be that all these have originated, *not with* the good, holy, positive men of each party, but with its negationists, the men of strife in each party? Experience shews me more and more that this is the case. I see that it is only by accident that the good men of each party are brought to insist on those points, which in part are even more inconsistent with their own peculiar truths than with those of their adversaries; that, on the other hand, they are the only points with which these disputatious men meddle, the points which suit their taste, the only points that they can understand. Let me consider then, first, my own position, and next, how I can act on my brethren. I cannot join in their parties; the more I see of them as parties, the more I see that the loudest talkers in each must have the pre-eminence; the more I see of their parties, the more I see that they are at war with the very idea of a Church, the more I am convinced that they are tools, with which the enemies

of the Church are able to act for its destruction. Twenty-five years ago the Edinburgh Review was able to act on the high Church party, and by addressing itself to its love of order, and hatred of fanaticism, to make it indifferent to the great work of preaching the Gospel to the nations, and even to our own colonies; thus persuading those who have the highest views of the power of the Church, to neglect that great commission which is the great seal and evidence of its power. Now, persons holding the same views are acting, through some of their other organs, upon the Evangelical party, urging their popularity and the duty of enforcing their own views as reasons for their casting themselves into the arms of the people, and forsaking all other dependence, thus tempting those very men who speak most of the opposition of society to the opinions they preach, to hang slavishly on its support. Here are reasons enough against joining either of these parties; but then what refuge have I? None other but in the Church herself. None other but in standing upon that ground, against which I know the gates of confusion shall not prevail. None other but in binding myself to the symbols of the Church, and declaring that, by God's grace, no party symbols shall ever tempt me to abandon them. But then what chance is there of reconciling these opposing bodies? Some sacrifices, it is said, must be made on each side. Granted. Each side must consent to become assertors of what they believe, and for a while to abstain from the delight of denying what their adversaries believe. They need not, according to the common phrase, give up all that is peculiar to each, and talk only of what is common,—they cannot practise such a trick upon themselves. The Spirit of God

has guided them to the perception of particular truths, and these it is their province, their vocation, to maintain. They need not be afraid that this potent assertion of truth will not find them enemies enough; it is assertion and not denial that has always gotten men enemies; but they must be content to believe, that their adversaries may possibly have been led into the perception of truths, which they have yet but imperfectly apprehended, but which may nevertheless be necessary to the full establishment and support of their own. And when they have resolved on this course, and begun to act upon it, then methinks the promise will come into operation, "To him that hath shall be given;" to him who stands fast on the bit of truth which he has, and does not let it go for man or devil, and therefore respects every bit of truth which his brother may have apprehended, to him will be given a daily more enlarged foundation to rest upon; and gradually the deep gulph, which seemed to separate him from his opponents, when selfish pride and hostility have been cast into it, will close up. The dream of such things would be a dream indeed, if I hoped that all men would be thus reconciled. I know that this is impossible. It is only the honest, the really truth-seeking, whom any thing can reconcile; the distance between the others must grow wider each day; the question is not how to bring them to peace, but how to bring out those who would be at peace from among them. And I say, this is the way. Here are these Articles, which we are told are the ministers of dissension and the destroyers of unity, the harrowers of the Spirit; good men of both parties, meditate on these: throw your magazines and newspapers into the fire, and for a while betake yourselves to the study of

this ancient document, which men whom you both profess to revere have bequeathed to you: see whether you will not find in them the justification of every part of either of your opinions to which you really with your hearts cleave—of all those views, which you could not abandon, because they were part of your very life; and whether you will not find in them the detection and exposure of various superstitions which have hung as rags about you, and which, because they were those which most grieved your brethren, your partizans have persuaded you were the most precious and sacred."

But I admitted, that, if the removal of Articles would have united Dissenters to us and to each other, this would be an argument in favour of that measure, which all the arguments contained in this pamphlet could not overthrow. Again the question is, would this be the effect of such a step? There is, I believe, a practical want of knowledge of the real state of the Dissenters, which the study of their authorized organs increases rather than dispels. To know what these men are thinking and feeling in all the different sects, there is need of some more familiar and cordial acquaintance with them, than I am afraid some Churchmen are willing to cultivate. Such acquaintance would, I apprehend, discover to us in the heart of each body a set of men, of whose very existence the teachers and noisy men are willingly ignorant; these persons living in the enjoyment of dissenting privileges and immunities, enjoying all their glorious liberty of conscience, and freedom from human restraints and impositions, are really sighing and crying by reason of the hard and intolerable bondage, to which they inwardly feel themselves subjected; and what is the

bondage? why, the bondage to the sect itself; they feel that "the bed" of sectarianism "is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it;" a "covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." They feel that they are hampered and penned in with a set of phrases, and words, and notions, which more effectually check all freedom, enfeeble knowledge, darken faith, and destroy communion, than the most direct tyranny; and yet even from this they are conscious that they are not exempt; the names of leaders and direct ministerial authority, scarcely exerted even in the Romish Church a more benumbing influence than over some of them. I do not say that these persons have yet sufficiently understood the wants of their own minds, to believe that those things which have been held up to them from their childhood as the badge of slavery, may really become the means of their emancipation. In some cases I know that it is far otherwise; the very restlessness and discontent of their own feelings drives them into politics, and makes some who are most inwardly conscious of their own oppression, the most sympathizing about ours. But for this effect I am afraid we have ourselves to blame. There have been many attempts made to conciliate the Dissenters; they have been met, with a sort of haughty distance, at public meetings, and clergymen have thought it an act of Christian charity to proclaim themselves members of a sect, in order to meet other sects half way. But though it has been the fashion of late years to treat Dissenters as *Dissenters* with something like friendliness, I do not think it has been at all the fashion to treat them heartily and affectionately as *men;* I do not think that Churchmen have felt as they ought, we have a position which we will not abandon; the

glory of that position is, that it is not an exclusive one, not a sectarian one; the glory of that position is, that it is one upon which all men may stand, who do not desire to be exclusive;—because, if this had been the feeling of our minds, and if our conduct had been conformed to it, I think that we should have understood that each party of these Dissenters has some separate principle for which he is contending; a true principle, an important principle, which he has made into an idol, by disconnecting it with others equally important. I think we should have said to ourselves, here is a person calling himself an Independent: he has got hold of this important positive truth, that each congregation ought to be distinct, but he has torn the doctrine away from the body of truth; he has fancied that he could not maintain the *distinctness* of congregations, without maintaining the *separateness* of congregations; and thus comes into collision with the Romanist, who has set up the unity of the Church against the distinctness of congregations: but I believe both; I believe that one is necessary to the other; I believe that there cannot be distinctness without unity, nor unity without distinctness. I would not therefore assail the man as an Independent, but I would claim fellowship with him as a Congregationalist. I will shew him that I go all lengths with him in his positive opinion; that I only differ from him in a point, which puts him at difference with others, who have also great truths to maintain, and puts him also, as I think I can shew him, at difference with himself.

In like manner we should have met the Anabaptist. We should have laid hold of the positive truth, that there must be a conscious and voluntary recognition

of our Church-membership, besides the act of sacramental fellowship; we should have shewn him that this is as much our tenet as his, that our service of Confirmation is a distinct acknowledgment of it, and that it is only the negative part of his creed,—the denial that there is another act of admission into Christ's body, an act setting forth that the constitution of the Church of Christ is an established constitution, not dependent on human faith, but fixed and certain in Christ, though no man should enter into it,—that it is only this part of his opinions with which we differ, and that this is the part which sets him at variance also with his dissenting brethren, and with the brethren of the Romish Church, and at variance also, we think we can shew him, with himself.

Precisely in the same manner we should address ourselves to a Quaker. We should shew him that we go all lengths with him, in the homage which we render to the Spirit of God,—in our belief of His presence and His operations; we should shew him that this was assumed in every service of our Church; we should tell him that we can admire and sympathize in the indignation of George Fox against the dry doctrinalism, and that, for the sake of it, and for his hearty affectionate spirit, we can forgive him those mad ravings against steeple houses and paid parsons, which they will hardly justify; we should shew him that we only differ from him, when he began to differ from himself and from the whole Church, denying to the Spirit of God the right and power to make use of human media and ordinances,—denying the fact that He has done so and does do so still; and thus denying His authority over institutions and nature, which we claim as His servants—the result of which denial is too

manifest; first, in their continual tendency to forget God as an *Object*, whilst they honour Him as a *Subject;* and, secondly, in their dangerous confusion of the Almighty Worker, with His own operations.

I dare to affirm that we may go on, and that we shall find among Unitarians also, that to which we may cordially address ourselves. Among these especially we see that it is negations and not positions which are the great foes of faith and of peace; and though in the mere statement of them it would be difficult to see much that is positive, yet in the minds and hearts of many who profess it, I am persuaded we may find a great deal. We may speak to that very honouring of the one God, and whilst we shew them, that the worship of the number One is the furthest thing possible from the worship of the one living and true God, we may yet profess a cordial agreement with them in this, that the pure idea of the unity of God, is the very sum and substance of Christianity, its foundation, and its top stone. We may admit, and that without the least qualification or embarrassment, that this truth has been oftentimes most cruelly and wickedly dealt with by some who are called orthodox; and then taking them to our Articles, we may shew them, that these very abuses, these very corruptions, are pointed out there; that we are warned against them, and taught to eschew them. We may shew them, that we only differ from them when they utterly desert their own professed principle of seeking after unity. We can shew them, that there is no such thing as sensible or material unity; that if matter be infinitely divisible, there cannot be. We can shew them, that as long as men turn to sensible appearances, and try things by that standard, they must be polytheists; and we

may shew them, that there is nevertheless a sublime and real idea of unity, to the knowledge of which, God, by His divine education of men, has been drawing them,—a unity with which they become acquainted by entering into and fulfilling the relations in which it is manifested; for that, first, he has brought man to look at Him through the relation of a family, and learn to know what unity means in that form; and, secondly, that he has taught them to look at Him in the nation, leading us into another and higher form of unity; and, lastly, has taught them to look at Him in the Church, gathering up all His former communications into this sublime sentence, "that they may be all one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I *in thee*, that they may be one in us."

The Articles then, I conceive, are no hindrance to Dissenters uniting with us, or with one another; but the more we become acquainted with their meaning and spirit, the more we shall be able to feel ourselves, and to shew them, what the grounds of unity and fellowship are, the more we shall be able to meet each person on the ground of the doctrine which has been revealed to him, and shew him that this doctrine forms an integral portion of our own faith. No doubt the spirit of our devotional formularies must animate our hearts as well as the wisdom of our intellectual formularies inform our understandings, if we would really bring men to a unity of faith and doctrine. This doubtless must be a gift from above, and be sought for by humble intercession. But that I am not telling dreams when I say, that not our forms, but something else which belongs to this age, is the hindrance to good men among the Dissenters from uniting with us, I will produce one proof and instance.

Not long ago a Wesleyan Methodist, whose language and style of writing proved him to be an honest and pious as well as a sensible man, undertook to answer the many invitations which Churchmen have made to his body to unite with us. Now what were the good man's difficulties? I have not his pamphlet at hand, and cannot quote his words, but of the substance I am sure, and the error, if I commit one, will presently be detected. 'We have,' he says, 'certain strong views about perfection and the sanctification of men's hearts by the Holy Spirit. *We find nothing hostile to these views in your Liturgy and Articles*, but while the Christian Observer and certain authorized publications of your Church continue to attack and abuse these doctrines, we must believe that you dissent from us, and therefore we cannot join you.' Now here is a testimony which is worth pages of writing; here is a man holding views, the proportionate importance of which to other views he probably greatly exaggerates,—which he has been accustomed to look at exclusively, till they have become magnified into idols in his mind; but still they are parts of the very life and substance of his heart, he has won them with his sword and his bow, or rather they have been gifts from an unseen Friend, and he will not part with them at our bidding. GOD forbid that he should! And who bids him part with them? The Church? Not at all. With all his prejudices he sees that she will let him enjoy his views, that she will sympathize with them, though in time she may enlarge and expand them, and destroy much of the superstition which now cleaves to them. But who bids him part with them? A nineteenth century magazine! one of the lights of the age! one of the promoters of unity! one of those dear

friends of the Church, who earnestly and steadily beseech her to alter her prayers, and deny the principles of her Catechism, that she may comprehend Dissenters!

There are some zealous and pious members of our Church, to whose meditation I would earnestly commend these remarks, and especially the fact which I have just set down,—I mean such men as Mr. Girdlestone of Sedgley, and Dr. Arnold of Rugby, whose zeal for uniting is no hypocritical pretence, but who have shewn themselves willing to sacrifice reputation among their brethren, and much that is very dear to all men, for the sake of promoting it. I do not think that all the extravagance of the scheme which one of *them* has recommended, would be a reason very much against considering or even embracing it, if it would accomplish the objects which the benevolent author expects; but if that whole scheme be founded on the ignorance of our actual position,—if it be the fact that the Church, as it now stands, is more really comprehensive than that alteration would make it,—if it be the fact that she has it in her power, by only making use of her formularies, by only presenting them fairly to her sons and to the Dissenters, to satisfy the wishes of those who really desire unity, and that without requiring from them the sacrifice of a single iota of their actual belief;—then I ask, will not these excellent men shew the real honesty and strength of their minds, by abandoning their own plans, however ingeniously conceived and fondly cherished, and by co-operating heart and hand in a work, really demanding far more sacrifices of taste and temper, of feeling and opinion, but requiring no sacrifice of our ancient symbols of faith and our theological Articles, wanting

not the assistance of Parliaments and Ministers, but wanting only the assistance of the Spirit of truth, unity, and concord, which has been promised to those who ask it?

And surely it is but a poor ambition in a world where evil is called good and good evil, and where bitter is put for sweet and sweet for bitter,—where the vile man is called liberal, and the churl said to be bountiful,—where love is cast out and despised, and lust, that has its dwelling hard by hate, usurps the name,—where the spirits of strife and dissension have attained such mighty power, that the Prince of Peace cannot enter but with a sword;—surely it is a poor ambition, in such a world, to be accounted friends of freedom, or truth, or unity; but *this* will be a delight worth seeking after, if we can look up to Him who searches the heart, and call Him to witness, that to be partakers ourselves, and to make our brethren partakers, of these precious gifts, is our heartiest and most inward desire,—for the fulfilment of which we would sacrifice all temporary concernments;—for the disappointment of which no blessings, which even He could vouchsafe, would compensate,—and which we are certain will not be disappointed, but will be perfectly accomplished, because He has wrought it in us, in despite of a rebellious nature, by his own free and reconciling Spirit.

NOTES.

Page 8. *Extracts from Antony à Wood's Annals.*

THE following extracts from the Annals of the University of Oxford shew, that the first introduction of the Articles into the University was *one* of a series of measures[a] which had for their object—not the exclusion of PAPISTS, as *members of a separate communion*, but—the rooting out of POPERY as an "*heretical pravity*" from the minds of students, and "the bringing up of youth in the knowledge and fear of God, in all manner of good learning and virtuous education, whereby after they may serve their Prince and Country in divers callings, for which respect a special care is to be had of those two Universities, that all meanes may be used to further the bringing up of youth that are bestowed there in all *good learning, civill education, and honest manners*, whereby the State and Commonwealth may receive hereafter great good[b]."

"1578. About the same time, that a special care should be had for the quelling and abolishing *heretical pravity* (*now accounted Popery, but before Wicclivism*) which, as 'twas pretended, did yet remain in the University, several Doctors and others were on the 20th December following authorized in Convocation to correct and amplify the Statute against it.

[a] That these measures would operate *indirectly* to the exclusion of confirmed heretics (whether Papists or others) is not denied, and would follow as a matter of course; all that is contended is that the *primary* and *direct* object in view was *education*, not *exclusion*.

[b] Letter of the Chancellor and Queen's Council (1593) about the discouragement of Interludes and Playes.

Soon after, the business being performed, not without some trouble, they presented their labors to the Convocation in the latter end of January following, which, being publicly read and perused, were at length accepted, with an explanation of some additions thereunto *for the benefit of the youth, and the informing them in true religion.* The particulars being in Latin you shall have them as they stand in the Register.

"I. *Ad extirpandam hæresim quamcunque et ad informandam in verâ pietate juventutem,* libros hosce legendos censemus et statuimus, viz. *Catechismum Alex. Noelli* majorem Lat. vel Græce, &c. vel *Catechismum Jo. Calvini* Lat. Gr. vel Hebr. vel *Elementa Christianæ Religionis* And. Hyperii, vel *Catechismum Heidelbergensem* pro captu auditorum et arbitrio legendum.

"II. His *possunt adjungi Hen. Bullingeri Catechesis* pro adultis, *et Institt. Calvini, vel Apologia Eccl. Anglicanæ, vel Articuli Religionis* in Synodo Lond. conscripti et authoritate Regia editi, cum explicatione locorum communium, testimoniis e Sacrâ Scripturâ aut interdum è Patribus desumptis. Ad primam lectionem juniores ad secundam provectiores omnes nullo gradû insignitos astringi volumus.

"III. Catechismos omnes, *sanæ huic doctrinæ* contrarios, aliosque *libros superstitiosos et papisticos* legi et haberi interdicimus."

* * * * *

"These heads or articles *for the expelling of Popery* being confirmed by the University, were imitated in another way by the citizens, viz. that whereas they had Sermons but seldom delivered to them in their public Church of St. Martin, they allowed twenty marks yearly to two Lecturers to preach by turns every Sunday in the said Church, selecting then two zealous Calvinists."

"1580. It must now be observed, that as the University the year before took care about *Catechising and Instructing* the juniors in such principles of Protestancy, that they themselves had been trained up in, which were much disliked by some that durst not as yet contradict them; so did they about preaching, setting constant Sermons, (which hitherto were but rarely used,) and forcing the youths not only to be present at, but give an account to their Tutors of them. . . . ."

" . . . . . And all this was done that the Word of God and Protestantism might encrease, and Romanism decay.

" 1581. The Members of the University, though *they had before made orders* for the *advancement of Religion and Learning*, yet I find them not all duly observed; also that whereas they had made other Injunctions for the reformation of several abuses, not well observed, complaints again were sent up to our Chancellor, (Leycester.) Whereupon, *after consultation had with several of the Academians*, he sends his letters to the University. . . . . wherein he tells them, that for the reformation of such matters he had sent enclosed certain proposals.

" Imprimis That whereas the old order of Matriculation is, that within 6 dayes of every Scholars first comming to Oxford, he shall take an oath to observe the Statutes of this University, &c. and forasmuch as by the negligence and carelessness of many Heads this hath been and daily is omitted. . . . . and by this means many Papists have heretofore and may hereafter lurke among you, and *be brought up by corrupt Tutors, nether yelding to God nor to her Majestie or your Universitye* theare bounden duty, as hath of late years too much appeared, and is evident in sundry yonge Students in your Universitie, sum being atte Roome, sum in the Seminaries and other places, *all out of her Majesties obedience*, I have thought to have this order following to be established.

" First, that no Scholler be admitted, unless he first before the Vice-Chancellor subscribe to the Articles of Religion agreed upon, take the oathe of the Majesties Supremacy, sweare to observe the Statutes of the University, if he be of lawful years to take an othe, &c.

" Secondly, that forasmuch as sundry parents, being themselves recusants or known or suspected Papists, have sent their sunns to the University, and dayly do and are *desirous to have their sunns by all likelyhood trayned up in the same Religion*, and for that purpose have, it may appeare, certain Tutors among you, of whome at the least they hope well to have their sons *instructed after theire* owne desire, I have thought good also to wish that by order of Convocation it may be likewise established, that no Tutor be allowed hereafter, but such as be of *sound religion*, and that under the hand of the Vice-Chancellor, and three Doctors of Divinity, and

three Bachelors of Divinity, or three Preachers for that purpose assembled together.

"Thirdly, Forasmuch as there is an order of catechising established among you, whereby *great increase of virtue and knowledge may be gathered,* I have thought good to wish to see the continuance of so godly an exercise.

"Fourthly, Whereas the profession of the Tongues and Sciences is not onlie most necessary for the advancement of good learning in your University, and trayning up of young Students in the same, but also that there are large stipends allowed for the Professors thereof: yet I understand that some of them have not been for the space of some whole years together read. . . . . .

"Fifthly, Understanding the number of Students with you in Divinity to be greatly increased, for the which I thanke God, I could wish your exercises in that Facultie, especially in Disputations in the open Schools to be somewhate more——— The paines is not great, the Exercise most laudable, and such as shall redound greatly both *to the glory of God, benefit both to the whole Universitye, and particular doers thereof, &c. &c.*"

"All which being read in the Convocation, the Vice-Chancellor added three more Proposals, &c. and . . . . they framed these Decrees following from them.

* * * * *

"These being the Decrees published this year, no man can think but that they were duly observed, *that Religion was thereby in hopes to be reformed,* and that *Learning* and *Virtue* was in possibility of flourishing."

"1589. I must now further tell you that what was omitted for the reformation of the University in the time of ROBERT Earl of LEICESTER, our Chancellor, was now eagerly prosecuted by his successor Sir CHRISTOPHER HATTON, Lord Chancellor of England; for upon consultation had with several Heads and Doctors of the University, as also upon the perusal of our Statutes and old Registers, he sends his letters, dated 19 August, with these injunctions following, to be published in Convocation, to the end, as he saith, the ancient dignity of the University be recovered, *learning* continued, *such as are hereafter to be employed both in Church and Commonwealth be better*

educated, and the estimation and credit of the members of the University be repaired, &c.

" First, therefore, as your Chancellor, I do require at your hands that your Statutes or Decrees for Matriculation, and Subscription by those that are matriculated to the Articles of Religion agreed upon Anno 1562, and to her Majesty's Supremacie, be carefully observed and henceforth put in execution, with all the other branches thereof. . . . . "

Then follow several Articles requiring the observance of all Statutes or Decrees relating to Prayers, Sermons, &c. of " the Decree *ad extirpandam hæresim*, made 1589 [lege 1578?] for catechising," and of all Statutes relating to public Lectures, Disputations, and Discipline.

" 1594. So much concerning Decrees to avoid trouble; now let's go to others for the settling of good order and reformation. As Sir CHRISTOPHER HATTON therefore, our Chancellor, had before endeavoured to reform what was neglected in the time of the Earl of LEICESTER, so doth now the Lord BUCKHURST, that in the time of Hatton, his immediate predecessor; for being informed by some of the Heads and Sages of the University, of the great disorder among us, sent his Letters dated the 10th of October to be communicated by the Vice-Chancellor to the Convocation, which being received they were publicly read four days after, the effect of which follows:

" ' Whereas the good estate and quiet government of the Realme both in Church and Commonwealth, dependeth not a little upon the good proceedings and carefull government of the Universities, as being the verie well-springs from which *religion, learning, virtue, and good discipline*, should flow over all the Realme,' &c."

After this follow four recommendations:

The first, that the University may be " purged from all *Jesuits, Seminaries*, and *notorious Recusants*," and " also that no justly suspected person, or known *Papist* at the least, may be suffered in any wise to have *the tuition and teaching of young Schollers to . . . . the danger and corruption of such Pupilles committed unto them.*"

The second, about Lectures, Disputations, and Exercises.

The third, about the revival of the ancient discipline in

private Colleges, and a reverent distinction of Degrees in public.

The fourth, about the reformation of academical apparell.

"Which orders being read in Convocation, and the execution of them put on the Heads of Colleges, *discipline became much refined, and virtue increased.* However, as by many such orders the Roman Catholicks had *a strict eye always over them*, yet the Puritans, who were now numerous in the University, being not so much regarded, did in effect do more harm than they."

Page 53. *On the Arian Heresy, as an exemplification of Horne Tooke's Theory*[c].

A most striking anticipation and application of Horne Tooke's theory is found in the well-known argument of Arius, that he merely affirms Christ to be the Son of God in the same sense in which all Christians and all holy men are called in Scripture the sons of God. Now, that the sense in which Christians are called 'sons of God,' is homogeneous with that in which Christ is the Son of God, is a truth which Athanasius believed, and for which he would have died as readily as Arius. 'He is not ashamed to call them brethren;' 'That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, &c.;' these are passages which Athanasius cherished far more tenderly than his opponent ever did. This truth of Arius is only *half* the truth which the Apostle is maintaining in the Epistle to the Hebrews, essential, as he shews, to the other half which Arius rejected. Where then lay the difference? Arius interpreted the words 'Son of God,' as applied to Christ (*i. e.* in their highest sense) by the words as applied to Christians (in a lower sense). St. Paul taught, and Athanasius believed, that the words 'Son of God' have no meaning unless there be an Only-begotten Son, one with the Father, in whom Christians are adopted, and by whom they have power to *become*, by actual apprehension, what they are by constitution. In fact, ecclesiastical history is full of

[c] If this note had reached the printer before page 53 was printed off, it would have superseded the note which stands at the foot of that page.

[d] See the letter of Eusebius of Nicomedia, to Paulinus of Tyre, and the circular letter of Alexander of Alexandria. *Newman on the Arians*, c. ii. sect. v.

commentaries npon the principle which Horne Tooke brought forth as perfectly novel and original at the end of the eighteenth century.

Page 68. *On Rhetoric.*

I have not mentioned RHETORIC among the Humanity studies of Oxford. I dó not pretend, however, to exclude it from the rank of a science. Aristotle has asserted its claims to that dignity; and who, on such a point, could gainsay such an authority? But though he has maintained, and, I think, proved that it has, ideally, a distinct foundation and a peculiar function, yet, practically, he treats it as dependent for its very existence upon Logic and Ethics, and as requiring for its elucidation and actual working a knowledge of Poetry, History, and Politics. And it must be evident to every person who studies his masterly treatise, that it is only by this means, viz. by divesting Rhetoric of its independency, that he has evaded the powerful objections of Plato in the Gorgias. Possibly, therefore, he would have agreed with Bacon, (who, it must be confessed, extends the same observation to Logic,) that Rhetoric is an art fitter for Graduates than Novices. But at all events, as to the immediate object of this pamphlet, it is evident that Rhetoric, according to the idea of the only author who has treated it scientifically, and whose work is the Oxford text book, being based upon sciences, which have their ground in Theology, and which cannot be explained but by means of it, must itself have the same foundation, and need the same helps for its interpretation.

THE END.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

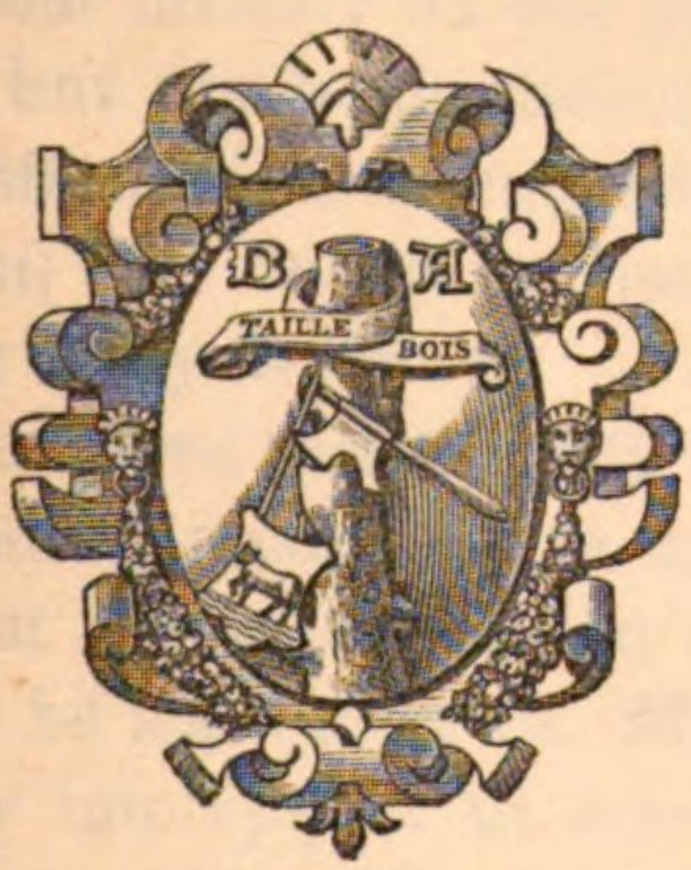
THOUGHTS

ON SUBSCRIPTION,

IN A LETTER TO

A MEMBER OF CONVOCATION.

BY THE REV. W. SEWELL, M. A.
FELLOW AND TUTOR OF EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD.



OXFORD: D. A. TALBOYS.
LONDON: C. AND J. RIVINGTON; J. BOHN;
AND H. G. BOHN.

M DCCC XXXIV.

LETTER.

My dear—

I am more ashamed and reluctant than I can express to take part in any controversies respecting the Universities. But we surely ought all of us to assist in fixing the principles on which we are to act, and in clearing away any perplexities. We seem to be placed all at once in a new position, and to require for our guidance many peculiar views, which have for some time been partially lost sight of, because they did not bear directly on our practice. Perhaps nothing but much discussion, with all its accompaniments of tedious enquiries and varieties of opinion, will enable us just at present to see our way fairly before us.

There are rumours, undoubtedly well founded, that a proposal for modifying, in some way, the test required at the matriculation of our members, will soon be laid before us. Most assuredly we are totally unprepared to consider such a measure with any thing like fairness and coolness. We have not thought of it, nor reasoned on it for years, as a practice which we might be called on to abolish, by any act of our own. All the old controversies on the subject have been long laid aside. And we shall in fact be taken by surprise, if any project is presented to us

without long previous notice, and much opportunity for consideration. But nothing, in such a moment as the present, could be more injudicious and more mischievous, than to plunge the University of Oxford into any step which it might afterwards desire to recall. It is impossible to overrate the importance of our position, and of our conduct at this crisis.

No one seems to doubt, that this country, and with this country all that depends upon it, (and the magnitude of these interests is surely sufficient to make a reasonable man tremble to touch them,) is at present in the midst, if not of a mighty evil, at least of a great struggle against evil. I am not speaking of political evil, of foolish laws, or party dissension, but of that evil which it is peculiarly our duty to anticipate, prevent, and cure, and which brings all other evils in its train; a deliberate attempt to undermine the foundations and the bulwarks of religion. Circumstances, of a nature almost more than providential, in which we need not include any mere local interest, or ebullition of political feelings, have conspired to unite us altogether in a most firm and deliberate resistance to the progress of this mischief. Perhaps as yet it is not possible to calculate the amount of good produced in the country, and we may fervently hope, secured to many generations, by the late declarations of our principles. But it is a matter of honest pride and satisfaction, that we have thus been enabled, by the blessing of God, to

fulfil not only our duty as individuals, but our own especial duty as members of this University. It was for this very purpose that our institutions were originally established. The very first foundations of this place were laid to form a sanctuary for learning, that learning might secure religion, and religion secure the nation. They were placed here together, as in a citadel, to guard all the best interests of the people. It was at a time when corruptions of religion were stealing into this country, and the country was involved in ignorance, that our schools were founded for the purpose of preserving religion, by creating knowledge. As the organs of instruction in religion, and of science as connected with religion, we received our privileges, we possess our endowments, we have from the very beginning of English history, always been the first to defend truth, and the last to abandon it. It may be hoped that an historical view of the blessings thus conferred upon the world by the University, to whose privileges we are heirs, will soon be laid before us, that we may learn the dignity of our post, and the responsibility of the trust. When great dangers and anxieties surround men, they require to be warmed and supported by such views of the past and the future. And we shall be very unfit to deliberate, and still more unfit to act, if we are left without them.

The University of Oxford has been for ages the recognised minister of the Christian Church

as existing in this country long before the corruptions of Popery. That great duty of education, which is the peculiar province of the whole Church, but which it cannot completely fulfil, especially in secular learning, without the aid of subordinate bodies, it has entrusted to us. As every parish was to have its school, and every cathedral its seminary, so in the great schemes of men, perhaps the very wisest of mankind, each country was to have its Universities. Upon this ground we have always been recognised by the Church itself as ecclesiastical bodies; and upon this ground we have always adhered even in our ceremonies and language, to many ecclesiastical forms. We are a great part of the Christian Church.

This is not a place for drawing out the proof of this important fact. I have reason to believe that it will soon be done by much better hands. But if we do not feel and understand this; if we imagine ourselves to be merely a secular institution for the general promotion of learning, or unite merely on individual accordance in sentiment, and attachment to Christianity, we shall assuredly fail in our duty, and our bond of union will be soon dissolved.

It is quite certain that to act with efficacy, and even with propriety, on any occasion, we must thoroughly understand the relations in which we are placed. And surely we need not add, that no person should be permitted to advise us who cannot understand them likewise. We are

not a political body, nor a body whose existence or duties depend primarily on the will of the State. Our allegiance is due to the Church. And in common honesty, faith, and truth, we cannot recognise any other authority as paramount to its interests, nor listen to any suggestions, however prudent and clear-sighted in worldly matters, unless they proceed from and close in the advancement of Catholic Christianity. If there are men who think with us, and think with truth, that the whole safety of the nation is wound up in the safety of the Establishment, and the safety of the Establishment in the conduct of our Universities, let them at least allow us to save all these inferior objects by the only way possible or good, by saving Christianity. If they think to employ us merely as a political power, merely for political ends, and if we condescend to permit such a degradation of our office, we shall be as useless to them, as contemptible to others, and ruinous to ourselves. If we save the Christianity of Englishmen, we save all. If we lose it, will any thing remain within these walls, or in the country, which is worth saving, or if saved would last for a year?

We must guard against the substitution of any but one object for our efforts, and we must also guard against any sidelong glances upon ulterior or subordinate results. I mean this. If we act to preserve our own privileges we shall act in selfishness, and cowardice. If to assist the Establishment, we shall scarcely have the

courage to be zealous in an honest correction of its defects. If to save the Country from demagogues, we shall be compelled to join, or rather to serve under others, who wish indeed the same end, but may pursue it by far other ways, and for far other purposes than are compatible with a Christian profession. Nothing has proved so fatal to the Church, or so dangerous to ourselves, as the suspicion of a worldly connection with a political party. Wherever Christianity combines it ought to lead. It must infuse the principle, select the objects, regulate the conduct. Wherever it consents to follow, it abandons its post. Those who usurp its place under all their professions of attachment, are ready in a moment to throw it back among the baggage waggons, as an incumbrance and a nuisance. They cannot respect those who do not respect themselves. And if any thing like political feeling mingles with our spirit at this moment we shall inevitably be lost.

We are treading a very narrow edge. If we fix our eyes steadily upon the right point, we shall advance unerringly and safely. But if we mistake that point, or even having once fixed it, suffer our sight to wander upon any thing collateral or beyond it, we must fall. Notions of conciliation, compromise, and expediency, all the shallow and wavering tactics of a cowardly prudence, will mix up with and entirely destroy the steadiness and solidity of our purpose. Prudence indeed is a virtue, and our first prudence a cal-

culation of consequences. But the second and highest prudence, which God commands, and our hearts require, and nature compels, is faith: faith in our principles and motives. Let us consent to retire from the dark labyrinth and mists of calculation. Let us fall back upon our own hearts; hallow and purify them; and then trust to the light within them, and to the hand of Providence to guide us.

I did not intend to have dwelt thus upon the principles of our conduct. But they undoubtedly involve every thing. And there is a difficulty in well fixing them, because they must rest upon views of Christianity which have for some time been partially obscured. It is composed of many parts, and each part is adapted to a peculiar exigency. The part which we require now is not so much its purifying morality, as the political and corporate character of the Christian Church. An age of darkness demanded an external pressure of ceremonies and fancy, and temporal power, and God permitted this to be supplied through the corruptions of Rome. An age of infidelity followed in which the evidences of its truth were brought out. To this succeeded an age of vice, and we have for years been confining ourselves to its lessons of virtue. There has now come on an age of scepticism within ourselves on all points where allegiance is required to the authority and guidance of the Church. There seem to be three classes of men, who wish to abolish the

practice of subscription. Those who reject belief altogether as necessary to religion; those who would admit no expression of it distinct from the Bible; and those, who allowing its necessity, and assenting to our forms, are yet unwilling to employ them as a test of admission to the University. The origin of each of these opinions seems to lie in a mistake or oversight with respect to the Constitution of the Church. Individual Christianity they each recognise. But they do not appear thoroughly to understand our social relation as Christians. I would not go so far back on a question seemingly so close before our feet, if I had not found it necessary for my own satisfaction in first examining the subject. In addition to which if our conduct is to be shaped upon principles, we must fully understand our position.

It seems, then, that one object of the Christian dispensation, at least one object among many, and, so far as we are concerned, the greatest, is to form out of the whole of mankind a body politic of moral beings united in the faith of Christ. We may see in heathen philosophy innumerable plans for attaining precisely a similar end. The two great works of Aristotle which, we in this place, are still unenlightened enough to think the most wonderful efforts of purely human reason, were written entirely with this view. And it would be very curious to trace out the analogy between his theoretical plan, and the practical influence of the Bible, and show their

striking correspondence in all that regards human nature. That man is a political being, was the basis of all his speculations on the means of improving us. And he saw that the evident designs of nature, in giving us capabilities of good, could never be perfected except under a system of society. Neither our moral nor intellectual excellencies, not even our animal faculties, can be fairly brought out if we are contemplated as individuals. What philosophy desired, Christianity [a] accomplishes; and we cannot understand its character without this clue.

The second important fact to be remembered, is the relation of the Christian body, as

[a] It is painful to speak of Christianity in philosophical language; and this becomes more painful, when we touch on subjects which come wholly within the region of faith. It would however be desirable, if this were the place, to search the Scriptures carefully, and collect all their intimations on the use and destination of this Christian Society, or the Church. We are very much deceived when we confine the Christian dispensation to this earth and the interests of man. The Bible repeatedly asserts, that it forms a great and connected portion of the whole moral creation of God. Instead of being a sort of after thought, as it has sometimes been presumptuously considered, its formation is stated to have been pre-ordained before the beginning of things. It serves also we are told to display the attributes of God to other beings. Its completion seems to be identified with the termination of this present Universe. And its position in the new Universe is marked, if any meaning may be drawn from language by the acknowledged laws of criticism, at the very head of the whole creation. Small as this earth may appear in the eyes of a physical philosopher, the Bible always speaks of it as the focus of some mighty operations, by which this present imperfect universe is to pass into another perfect and final. These are not subjects to be touched on lightly, or discussed without much awe. And perhaps such a view of our future destination is too overpowering to our faculties. But this is an age, when such enquiries are peculiarly needed. And they will explain so many difficulties in the scheme both of Nature and Revelation, and bear so directly on the character of our own duties at this moment, that I could not forbear to allude to them.

it now exists, to the future society of Christ in the other world. Just as in Revelation this universe is described as preparatory to another, so an imperfect body of men united under the name of Christ, is formed upon earth, and out of it, and by means of it, a perfect body is gradually forming in Heaven. The visible Church is the womb of the invisible. It is perpetually receiving fresh materials to be wrought within its own bosom from a very rough, defective faith, into the full maturity of Christian virtues. It receives these materials partly from the heathen world, in penitent and docile offenders, but chiefly from the children of those who are already members of its body. Neither the preaching of repentance and faith, nor the Baptism of Infants, can bring within the walls of the Church any thing but elements of good, to be placed under a course of education, and so brought finally to perfection. Nothing can be more important to remember. The Church upon earth is not, it never was intended to be, a body of perfect men. It is a society formed of all grades and classes of goodness, from the first return of moral sense, waking up into remorse, and taking refuge in the promise of pardon, to the complete triumph of mind over body, when we have been wrought, by trials and sufferings, into saints and angels, and stand upon the side of the grave, waiting to be carried across it. It comprehends a still lower class. And an immense proportion of its members, real members,

because admitted by the authority of its founder, in strict analogy with all the dealings of God in nature, are minds not yet capable of distinguishing good from evil. The infant baptised in its cradle is as much a member of the visible Church as the martyr at the stake. Very remarkable analogies between this constitution of the Christian body upon earth, and the general laws of the Universe, must strike any one who thinks on the subject. But we are only concerned with it as pointing out the great duty, business, and functions of the Church itself.

This duty is education. The education of its members—to use the Scriptural language, the edification or building up of the body of Christ. Every stone must be fashioned by its care in this desert of the earth, and God himself will put them together, without noise of axe or ringing of iron, in a world beyond our senses.

This education is carried on partly by God himself, in that arrangement of outward circumstances which heathens attribute to chance, and which in nature extends alike over all mankind. Our birth, condition of life, constitution of body, are all instruments of discipline. In Christians we know that they are regulated by a particular Providence. There is, moreover, the direct and personal communication of God's Holy Spirit. And thus far the assistance of the Church is not required. But it would be very inconsistent with the analogy of God's natural laws, and perhaps inexplicable in the plan of Christianity, if He

did not also condescend to employ the co-operation of man. And, in fact, the character of Christianity is such, that it necessarily draws men into a social form, and points their exertions to the increase, and especially the improvement, of their own body. Exactly in proportion as we become good Christians, we become anxious for the Christianity of others, and interested in the well-being of the Church.

With the duty of education arises the necessity of internal government. The whole body must be divided into two parts, the instructors and the instructed. Our personal advancement in holiness places us insensibly and necessarily within the former. But that nothing may be left to accident, (if such a term may be used,) and that every possible security may be provided for the regular discharge of our duties, the peculiar responsibility of education is imposed on a distinct body. These are to be dispersed over the whole extent of the Church, to watch over its several portions, diffuse the knowledge which is requisite for practice, and exercise a salutary control over men's hearts and lives. And that learning, as the basis of religious knowledge, may be duly cultivated, incorporations of the same instructors are stationed at intervals, to be what the heart is to the body, the centre of purification and life. Such seems to be the theory of the Church. And, remember, in speaking of the Church, the word is not limited to that branch of it in which we are pe-

culiarly interested, but includes the whole visible Church, whose limits are not to be narrowed by any human being, but are perhaps co-extensive with the assumption of the name of Christian.

With this scheme of things is essentially and inseparably connected the necessity of a faith. It cannot exist or be conducted, without the establishment of certain facts, distinct from feelings and duties, and at first sight unconnected with morality, which therefore have been invidiously described as Theological Dogmas; and which must be matters of belief, because from their very nature they cannot be matters of experience.

In the first place, the very existence of the society rests ultimately upon such facts. Our allegiance to the Church depends upon our personal Christianity; just as real patriotism depends upon private virtues. We are bound together as Christians by devotion to one Great Head, by consciousness of our common sins, by belief in our common pardon, by sharing in the same Holy Spirit, by looking forward to the same state of glory. All these are matters of fact, which cannot be presented to the senses. They are inferences from signs—some of them past, some future, all hidden from our eyes. They are therefore matters of belief—Take them away from our thoughts, and our attachment to the Church must cease; and it must at once, unless propped up by some false extraneous support, crumble into atoms. The coherence of every

society depends on the continuance of the principle on which it is based. The principle of the Church is faith in certain facts. And, therefore, the preservation of this faith is essential to its existence.

It is equally essential to the discharge of its duty of education.

All virtue, a heathen moralist will tell us, necessarily implies knowledge. Foresight of facts, and right views of relations are great parts,—are the skeletons as it were, and framework of all right feelings. Together they constitute our morality. By themselves they are nothing but dry bones; but without them our flesh and blood affections cannot be supported.

What experience is to worldly morality, faith is to the morality of Christians. Both have facts for their subject, and the right regulation of our practice for their end. The only difference is, that the facts of Christianity are distant, higher, nobler, and more intellectual, than those which press upon the senses. But their utility is the same.

A heathen himself would tell us, that to leave out the great facts of Christianity from the moral formation of a being admitted into the society of the Church, would be a process as absurd as to construct an instrument without reference to its use. And the attempt to educate a Christian except by holding constantly before him the image of his God, the means of his redemption, the promises which he inherits, and the conditions

of his social relations; in one word, to conceal, or not to settle the great articles of his faith, though merely as facts and dogmas, must be as irreconcileable to reason as to direct a person to a spot without showing him his road or his object.

It is unnecessary here to restate the necessity of employing these facts and dogmas, as instruments of general morality.—We all know that important confession of a most eminent man; one perhaps, which in our own hearts, if not in our ministerial duties, we can all make likewise—that fourteen years of earnest toil spent in the endeavour to make men good by the common motives of earthly virtue, were spent in vain—that nothing was done till the Gospel was laid before them, and brought to bear upon their thoughts and affections. But indeed we should be ashamed to argue in defence of our faith by representing it merely as an instrument of worldly morality. Perhaps the words may not be uttered without danger of misconception and censure—but morality, the morality of the world,—justice, beneficence, fortitude, and prudence,—is not the object of Christianity. All the wonders of Revelation were not exhibited solely to make men good. They were exhibited to form a Church—to form it upon the principle of faith. That faith cannot possibly exist without morality in its highest perfection. It is the source and the life-spring of all morality, and the root cannot exist without the fruits. But these fruits are very different from the few meagre starveling virtues, which

may be forced and wrung from the barrenness of the world, by selfishness, cold-heartedness, or pride. And as they cannot be poured forth but out of faith, and in faith are necessarily included, upon all received estimates of proportion, faith is prior to those, and greater, and better.

It is difficult to touch on such topics briefly, and at the same time safely. But the heads and summaries of the argument are all that I wish to suggest. And this last, in the present day, seems more important than any; because it at once precludes all invidious and mischievous comparisons between Philosophy and the religion of Christ.

While these considerations may show the necessity of possessing some code or system of faith as distinct from precepts of morality, it shows also the limits and views to which such a system must be confined. It must admit no theological speculation merely to satisfy curiosity or indulge dogmatism. It has no interest in opinions which do not bear on the safety of the Church, on the foundations of its social system, or on the Christian virtues of the individual. Whether or not the Articles of the Church of England are of this nature, whether or not they have rashly ventured into questions of metaphysical subtleties; or confined themselves wholly to facts of direct practical bearing and efficacy, must be decided by examination of themselves. We who acknowledge their excellence do not require them to be defended.

These observations thus far have been directed to those men, and they are very numerous in the present day, who cannot understand the utility of any thing like a creed of facts as distinct from moral lessons; and who therefore are willing to remove every standard and limitation of belief. With them knowledge is not necessary to virtue, and opinions are mechanically formed, and therefore not morally responsible. Every man has a right to his own judgment, and no power of deciding upon truth exists beyond the fancy of the individual. And thus the Church is refused the right of fixing any measure of belief, and still more, is censured and reproached for attaching either merit to faith, or peril and punishment to doubt. Of the answer to these three assumptions, vitally destructive as they are of all reason and all goodness, one has been given already. Knowledge is a necessary, an inseparable ingredient of virtue; and, therefore, Christian knowledge of Christian virtue. But a power also does exist beyond individual opinion of pronouncing on truth and falsehood—a power without which human nature and society must perish from the earth, and which not only the philosophy of heathens, but the every day practice of life establishes, recognises, and obeys. It is vested in the hands of society.

We receive facts upon our own judgment. If we doubt we apply to the judgment, not of individuals but of bodies; and of bodies practically concerned in the subjects which are matters

of dispute. We know that nothing like mathematical certainty can possibly, from the nature of things, be attained in any question of fact. But a certainty, fully sufficient to calm anxiety and satisfy doubt, may be found in the decisions of men supporting and correcting each other in a spirit of honesty and caution. It is upon this moral authority of numbers that all views of goodness and expediency, all truths which relate to practice, I had almost said our physical science, so far as it is taught in system and embodied in art, is ultimately received. Strike it out of the world, and human reason sinks powerless to the ground. And what the consent of nations and the traditions of past generations are to the wisdom of the world, such the recorded decisions of the Church upon disputable opinions in religion —decisions not arbitrarily assumed, or servilely admitted, but sanctioned by the learning of philosophers, the meekness of angels, and the blood of martyrs—are to the faith of Christians. The analogy is perfect, the necessity evident, the reasonableness indisputable.

On the third point, the involuntary character and irresponsibility of opinion, I would willingly say nothing. It is a question too deeply mixed up with the most serious considerations to be treated except most fully. But it ought to be met at once. It evinces a most lamentable and most unphilosophical confusion of the first impression of statements on the mind, with that fixed and habitual reception of them, which is

faith in its perfect sense. Opinion beyond doubt is mechanical, so far as opinion expresses the first sentiment of agreement or disagreement, which arises when a fact is laid before us. We can no more avoid or prevent our opinions in this point of view, then we can prevent the sensation of heat when we touch fire. But even here, in all subjects of practice, opinions are the tests of morality, and are therefore on every principle of justice cognisable and responsible as such Let us not confound physical truths, in which nothing but ideas are concerned, with truths that awake feelings, and bear upon actions. Tell a man that two angles are equal, and his doubt implies nothing but his ignorance. Tell him that his nature is sinful, or that a being who can relieve him is at hand, and besides a comparison of the facts with similar experience in the past, there will rise up, from his passions and affections, a hope or fear, on which the decision will depend. Still more will this be the case where the formation of faith depends, not upon a momentary impression, but upon an active principle within us, struggling against the pressure of sensible objects, and dwelling upon, recalling, and realizing in our thoughts, things which we never saw. Faith, in the mind of a Christian is the creation of a new world of ideas, apart from and opposed to the old. This creation must be gradual. It is the work of repeated exertion, and every exertion is voluntary.

Belief, therefore, is an act of the will, and as such Christians regard it.

So much for the importance of sound opinions and facts as distinct from moral precepts.

The next question (it is really painful to enter on it, as if all previous controversies upon it had been thrown aside, or unknown) is the relation in which the Bible stands to such a summary of facts. Can we place the Scriptures in the hands of a young Christian, as his only guide to that knowledge upon which his Christian virtues are to rest? Was it ever intended for such a purpose? Is there any ground in reason or nature for taking it separately and alone as a complete code of Christian education?

One answer is obvious. The Bible, all men allow it, is subject to a variety of interpretations. Of these only one can be right. Only one, therefore, can be selected by the parental authority of the Church, in her communication with her children. This she must place in the hands of her teachers, and she must exclude from her communion those teachers who reject it. If this exclusion appear harsh, we must remember that a wise Church will never attempt to interpret, where the question is not necessarily connected with the vital parts of Christianity, both individual and social. She will not state facts, merely because they are facts, nor try to induce opinion, where opinion may be safely left free. And hence it is no inconsistency in our Church, but rather a great proof of its wisdom, that so much

latitude exists among its members on many speculative points of theology; and that so many points are undecided, because no immediate necessity exists for guarding against prevalent errors.

But let us look more closely into the question.

There is in the present day a great aversion to dogmatism and authority in reason. Perhaps we are all slightly infected with the prevailing taint. There are some things in our Creeds and Articles too much associated in our minds with scholastic follies, and extinct errors; some things which seem obsolete; and certainly some imperativeness of tone, which may offend the pride of our reason, and even seem at times to detract from our reverence to the Bible.

But one great reason for maintaining the practice of subscription is, that Articles of faith are a necessary, essential part of all Christianity: and their solemn recognition as such, in conjunction with the Bible, is one of our most important duties at this moment, in the great centre and citadel of Christianity. This point, therefore, requires to be fully stated.

In the first place, it is reasonable to expect that the revelation of religion should be analogous to the revelation of nature. I mean, its mode and character. God has placed before us two books, Nature and the Bible. And regarded as vehicles of knowledge their correspondence is precise. Both are, at first sight, a mass of unarranged facts, mixed up with incidental appeals

to our imagination and feelings. Both, we are assured, are constructed upon general and unerring laws: but laws which are studiously buried under heaps of apparent incongruities. Both are systems taken to pieces, and placed before us to be arranged and reconstructed by the exercise of our own reason. A wheel here, a spring there, a pin missed, and found at last in some neglected corner; pieces to be dovetailed into each other, but carefully put apart; slight analogies to be carefully observed, adjustments to be tried and rejected, the minutest points of observation leading to the greatest results; nothing clear without comparison, and no knowledge of value communicated except to the practised head and well-regulated heart: this is equally the description of the works of Nature and of the Bible. "I gave my heart," says the Preacher, (Eccles. i. 13,) "to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under Heaven. This sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith." This, indeed, is the fair account of the peculiar construction of the Bible. It is a sealed book to all who do not come to it with previous knowledge, and are not able and willing to grapple with its difficulties. Nothing, in fact, is so far from the plan of God, judged of by the sight of his works, as the making or permitting us to be mere passive machines in his hands. All the wonders before us are arranged to rouse up a principle of independent action within our own hearts. They

are, therefore, full of difficulties, temptations, and obscurities. The Bible as well as Nature.

But God has never left man to read the latter without assistance; without some authority which may place in his hands, ready prepared and digested, the rudiments of knowledge; extracted, by profound research, from the vast volume of the world; and which may subsequently check and control him when he studies that volume by himself. Direct communication from Heaven served as this authority to our first parents. The teaching of man himself has supplied its place to their successors; and of man not individually, but collectively. All the elementary science which we lay before our children in their first years, has been established and received upon the labours of men in the aggregate. No man in his senses presumes to teach his child his own crude speculations in theory, or confines himself to the facts of his own experience. He has recourse to the deductions of preceding ages; to the received opinions of the world in worldly matters, and of philosophers in matters of philosophy. He takes catechisms of history, creeds of science, articles of philosophy, which he seldom examines himself, but receives them on the authority of society, because on such points society is competent to judge. He places these before his children in the very earliest of their studies, in the very alphabet of all knowledge, and he recurs again to these at every fresh stage of education. Deny him this power. Leave him

to himself, and what is to become of the instructor or the instructed. But in religion God has only done the same as he has in every branch of human knowledge. At our first introduction into the Church we are all, spiritually, infants, most of us physically so. An unseen world, and relations only discoverable by inference and belief, must be revealed to us. All that we want to know is told us in the Bible, just as all the laws of physics are contained in nature; but told us in such a way that we cannot understand them at first—so told us, that we may not understand them too easily, or too passively. The whole Bible is, like the whole of nature, one great parable. But as the first elements of knowledge must, at the creation of man, have been communicated to him personally from God, so at the creation of the Church an authority of inspiration was raised up, to be orally consulted, and to be obeyed on the testimony of miracles. This was withdrawn by degrees, and human authority, human so far as it is tried by the same tests which are applied to it in other knowledge, and yet divine in its apostolical tradition, was substituted as a guide to the Bible. From this flow our grammars of religion, our catechisms. From this also are derived our standard correctives of error—our Articles. Both equally the result of deep research and wide induction. Both necessary in religious education, both assisted by oral instruction; and both received, because laid down not capriciously or arbitrarily, but by men

full of caution, of great learning, evidently disinterested, thoroughly versed both in the knowledge and the virtues of the Bible—mutually supported in their points of agreement, and corrected in their tendencies to error; and whose moral authority was sealed, as the moral authority of the Apostles, by their sufferings and death. Their character is this. They are not independent dogmas or traditions, which are analogous only to philosophical dreams and theories; but interpretations of the Scriptures, as science is the interpretation of nature—always to be compared with them, perfectly invalid without them, yet resting on a different authority—which we are neither to admit, without finding them supported by the Bible, nor yet rashly to reject even on a suspicion of error, because we are conscious of our own ignorance, and reverence the wisdom of ages.

Thus even as a depositary of knowledge the Bible must be supplied with a key. But it is also a depositary of very peculiar knowledge, not only involved in obscurity on the common principle of all natural knowledge, but rendered still more difficult by its wonderful adaptation to the moral nature of man. Look on it merely as moral lessons, and still the same necessity arises for some explaining, correcting power.

The Bible is one vast instrument for acting on the human heart. It is constructed for every age, for every country, for every individual in each country, for every hour in the life of each

individual, and for every shade of opinion and variation of feeling which that hour may produce. In the complexity of purposes to which it is applied, there is nothing like it in the world, scarcely in the human fancy. Our animal frames are sufficiently multifarious in their uses. But compared with the Bible they are simplicity itself.

To fulfil all these various purposes, the whole structure of the Bible is built upon contradictions. Man himself is a contradiction. Nothing can be more opposite than his tendencies; and that which is to reconcile them together must be full of oppositions likewise. Thus the facts of a Trinity in Unity, the perfect humanity and perfect divinity of our Lord, predestination and free-will, faith and works, the fear of God and the love of God, man's greatness and his meanness, the permission of evil and yet the prevalence of good, the omnipotence of grace yet the necessity of self-exertion, the absence of merit and yet the distribution of rewards, the right of private judgment and the submission to authority, these and very many more might be mentioned as instances of opposite poles between which the human heart is constantly vibrating, till it settles down into a fixed centre of moderation and adjustment. Nothing but such a system of mutual attractions and repulsions, kept playing, as it were, over our affections, could have the effect of bringing them all out, and yet controlling and harmonising all.

But such a scheme, if formally laid together, would completely unfit the Bible for popular use. It is, therefore, taken to pieces, and carefully dispersed, for the most part, over the whole volume of revelation. It is not till we have deeply studied it, brought together distant portions, and followed up many slight intimations, that we even perceive the difficulty. Here, then, arises the first necessity for framing a compendious view of these seemingly opposing dicta; that while a student is under the influence of one principle he may not be carried away entirely from the other. Nearly all the Articles of the Church of England are especially directed to this end. They turn on the contradictions of religion. They supply us at once with those checks and warnings, which, if left to be extracted from the Bible, we would either not discover at all, or discover too late to prevent extravagance and error.

In a still more advanced stage of Christian knowledge, when these oppositions are perceived, and are become subjects of polemical discussion the necessity becomes still more evident. They are protestations against heresies. Heresy in the present day is an invidious word. But if the Church be a polity, and a polity founded upon faith, its governors can no more avoid prescribing certain terms of communion, and denouncing departures from its standard of faith, than any society whatever can exist without laws relating to its object, or without more than a tacit

censure upon members who infringe them. It is from forgetting the essentially social character of the Christian body, and from mistaking mere morality for its basis instead of faith, that men have learnt to undervalue the duty of fixing limits to its extent, and formally stating the dogmas on which those limits rest. But it should be particularly remembered, that as in all civil dissensions there is a difference between the voluntary secession of citizens from the great mass of their society and their forcible extrusion, so the Church in erecting her standard, suffers her members to retire, and makes heresy a voluntary act. The Church of England is not to be confounded with the Church of Rome in her demand for uniformity of faith. One permits departure; the other confines its members. One fixes her own belief, and opens it to voluntary conformity. The other demands unlimited confidence, and compels acquiescence. Men are sometimes enraptured with the notion of renouncing all limitations of Churches and throwing them together in form, as they exist together in name. But what should we say to a plan for uniting all mankind, or all Europeans, under one common government, or rather under no government at all, as the best mode of preventing wars? What should we seriously think of the man who set forth in the quixotic hope of persuading each nation to lay aside its separate interests, its popular prejudices, its hopes of aggrandisement, its internal peace

and independence, that they might all be fused into one great mass, in which all dissensions should be lost? Conquest indeed might do it. And this the ascendancy of Popery effected in the Church. A complete annihilation of the social principle might also do it. And such is the present tendency both of civil and religious opinion, but with what effect on the happiness of mankind, and the soundness of religion, we need not enquire. The diffusion of perfect charity and perfect knowledge might also accomplish it; but by removing the motives of separation, not forcibly binding men together while the principle of repulsion is still in force. The political system of Europe is strictly analogous to the state of the Christian Church. At one time united under one grand despotism. Then gradually broken up into kingdoms as the despotism became weaker, or the principle of independence more strong—for centuries distracted with wars, and filled with opposite interests, but never at peace, or united, except when a balance of power has been established by the controlled and responsible ascendancy of some one portion.

For divided as Europe is by geographical limits and separate interests and languages, it may still be at rest within itself, and exert its power on the rest of the world, if its several portions will consent to continue under such a system, and cultivate a general patriotism. But if each nation is to prosecute its own views, regardless of all public spirit and political wisdom;

if we are all to struggle, not for the pre-eminence of one, but the common equality of all, instead of peace and union, there can result, so long as human nature continues what it is, nothing but dissension and war. The tranquillity of Europe is maintained by the equipoise of separate portions, and the determinate character of it divisions. The Christian Church may also be preserved in order and brotherly love, if its members will consent to retain each their own station and limits: and without annihilating their external boundaries, will cultivate a catholic spirit. But a rash fraternization of sects, still keeping their separate views, and mutual jealousies (and while the principle of Christianity is alive in them, these cannot be extinguished), is as wild and as mischievous a scheme as a fraternization of hostile people. It has never yet been attempted except in the frantic dreams of democratical enthusiasts. It can only be followed by fiercer discord, or by a total extinction of that patriotism, which never burns clearly and steadily except when partially confined, and radiating from one fixed centre. To remove the external separation of sects, while the internal continues; or to think of removing the internal, by withdrawing the external; to hope in fact for any peace to the Church, but by diffusing the spirit of peace, is vain and idle. It is worse than idle. It is as mischievous in practice as false in theory. It would destroy the very foundation of Christianity.

And this point brings us to a fourth important use of Articles of faith. The more we examine the laws of our belief, and the nature of all knowledge, the more sure we become that God never intended us to possess in any matter of fact, mathematical science. For the same reason that he has made all knowledge difficult, he has involved it all in doubt, that so the heart may have room to play without a mechanical pressure from the reason, and we may be taught by the experience of uncertainty, to throw ourselves back from calculation to principles, and from principles to faith; till our reasoning as well as our practice flows from an internal spring, and we become, what he created us to become, independent originators of action. For this reason also, not only the general evidences of Christianity, but its particular interpretations are all open to cavil, and if we choose liable to suspicion. From the nature of the human mind it cannot possibly be otherwise in any moral subject, but least of all in the Bible. The facts which it communicates, the order in which they are presented, the very nature of the language, and still more the difficulties of translation, all conspire to split religious opinions into ten thousand forms, just as precisely analogous difficulties render our intercourse with other minds, and our information concerning them, so full of perplexities and obscurities.

The first result of this is anxiety: the second doubt: the third either total unbelief, or re-

currence to some infallible standard beyond the Bible, and beyond ourselves. Such a standard the Romish Church readily supplied; but in a very different way from that which the analogy of nature suggests and Christianity requires. It pretended to mathematical certainty. And no sooner did men begin to reason than they discovered and rejected the absurdity. Driven from this test of truth, they took refuge in individual authority. And then, bewildered with the multitude of differences, they either sunk in self distrust into a servile submission to some chosen teacher, or threw themselves, in a spirit of presumption as illogical as it is unchristian, upon their own unbalanced judgment; or, when both these failed, they fell into that miserable scepticism, that giddiness and sea sickness of the intellect, which is brought on by perpetual fluctuations in our own and all surrounding opinions.

It is here that the authority of the Church steps in, not with an infallible standard—God forbid! but with as much certainty as men possess in any other practical matter—as much as is consistent with the nature of the case, with the exercise of our own reason, and the free play of our moral affections. And so much is absolutely necessary. It is sufficiently important to bear repetition, that without it we could no more logically reason upon the truths of the Bible, than we could upon human nature without the general testimony of mankind; upon Physics without the agreement of philosophers; or on govern-

ment without the data of politicians. Each man would be compelled to begin for himself and end in himself. Not a shadow of solidity would be left for any belief; and the whole basis of our reasoning would be gone. And let us remember, that it is not men who supply this standard, but Christians. Mathematicians for mathematics—statesmen for politics—generals for military tactics—political economists for the science of wealth, but Christians, true perfect Christians, for Christianity. Neither is it one individual—for one would have no power. It is a body, regularly formed, carefully preserved through many generations, acting through its authorised heads, and guaranteed by all those tests on which evidence is legitimately received.

We may add, from the assurance of God, that his own Inspiration was not wanting. But these are not perhaps days when the direct abiding presence of God's Holy Spirit upon earth in the heart of his Church can be spoken of, without risking irreverence; or when common men know enough of the past to understand how the lives and deaths of the great framers of our Articles attested a supernatural assistance.

But, indeed, not our own Articles only, though they claim authority in a more high and especial sense; but all creeds, confessions, formularies of doctrine, and summaries of Christian education, which come from bodies of Christians, are valuable in the same manner. They ought all to be maintained. They all combine together

to form by their mutual correction, a standard for the heathen world, as the conflicting opinions of individual Christians brought into any agreement, form a standard for a particular Church. By comparing them we easily distinguish the fundamental from the accidental part of Christianity: we confirm some by their common recognition; and admit a rational latitude of belief in others which are more generally disputed. Each creed has a certain authority in a logical sense, but an authority which is to be measured and ascertained by the same rules which are employed in all other similar estimates. And the result of their comparison, again, is just so far certain as to remove any practical doubt, and so far uncertain as to fall short of mechanical demonstration. To sum up the argument in one word: Neither private judgment nor the authority of the Church is separately to be followed—Both are required by the Christian. No private judgment without authority, no authority without private judgment. But the authority of the Church is embodied in its Articles of faith—and therefore those Articles can no more be dispensed with—they are to be watched over with scarcely less care—they are as much an integral part of the Christian dispensation—as the Bible itself.

It is this view of their use and character, a view it is hoped not extravagant, but formed from a sober examination of human nature and God's acknowledged dealings with us, which ren-

ders any alteration regarding them so full of responsibility and anxiety. It must be so especially at present, when every point which they are raised to guard has been so violently attacked, and their own value seems forgotten or despised. It would be a very useful work, which should point out how the ruin of Churches may be traced to some false principle respecting their standard of faith. It may be still more useful for us, who are in possession of one which we reverence and love—for us particularly who are entrusted with the custody of it—to contemplate the state of Christianity in every part of the globe, and pause at least before we take a step, which may lower it in our own eyes, and throw suspicion upon our attachment to it in the eyes of the world. One half of Europe under the scourge of popery; Germany running wild in philosophy; the great Presbyterian churches sinking into Socinianism; America filled with dissension; France almost blotted from the list of Christian nations; even England overrun, not with religious dissent, by which vital Christianity may very often be supported, but with religious indifference—surely this is a sight to awe us; when we are called on by the voice of the age to set aside, even in a form, our Articles of religion. Can the age understand their value? Can it interpret their use? Can any censure it may pass respecting them come to us with authority, or must it necessarily be feared and suspected?

It is indeed an admirable rule, to comply in all indifferent matters, with the feelings and habits which surround us. And it is a principle thoroughly Christian to abstain from all appearance of evil. But to meddle with Articles of faith at such a moment as the present, never can be a matter of indifference. And to remove all appearance of evil, when the judges of evil are incapable of understanding what is good, is a very dangerous, perhaps a very guilty, compliance with the clamour of the world. We are not of the world. Every day is drawing closer the bonds of Christian union and detaching us from the world. Upon the will of the world indeed depend our rank, our revenues, and our name. But it is to be hoped that we have other treasures and other objects; and that in all our conduct now, we shall look only to the duties which we owe to the catholic Christianity of the Church.

If any use which we make of our Articles of faith be inconsistent with those duties, let it be abolished. If on a most anxious enquiry a sincere and perfect Christian, perfect in knowledge as well as feelings, would disapprove of their employment—if the voice of Christian antiquity is against us—if God in his own dealings with men seems to point out an opposite course —let us change. It can neither be right nor safe to persevere. But these are the views which we must take, and the judgment to which

we must apply. Any other must be totally false. We should not insist on the employment of axioms of religion in political tactics; and we should not receive political tactics as guides in matters of religion.

Now in requiring subscription to our Articles, the University seems to have two distinct objects in view. To one of them no possible objection can be made, and although a mere form, it involves a vital principle. As the great seminary of the Church, receiving students to be educated, not in mere knowledge, but in knowledge and religion combined, and therefore placing religion at the head of all knowledge, when her students come to be admitted, she lays formally in their hands the two great foundations of their religion, the Bible and the Articles: for the Bible is included in the Articles. If Oxford was founded and endowed solely for the encouragement of learning, this perhaps would seem an unnecessary intrusion of religious opinion. But as such is not her destination, and as religion is the great end of her institutions, no act can be more appropriate, more natural, or more necessary. Her rules of discipline and general statutes are given to young men upon a somewhat similar principle. Perhaps some more direct and explicit declaration of this intention might be framed: but the intention itself is so just and good—it flows so naturally from the relation in which the University stands to her members—it is so bold a recognition of her peculiar functions

in the eyes of an invidious world—and it keeps before us all such a beacon to guide us in our duties—that merely as members of her body we ought to maintain and enforce it. But as Christians we are equally interested in it. And as giving the public and continued sanction of a learned body to truths not commonly impugned—to the necessity of a faith, to the authority of our Church, and to the peculiar interpretations of that Church—it is perhaps invaluable. Let us ask ourselves, if in the prevailing tone of popular feeling on the subject of religion, its removal is not likely to encourage the doubts of some, the scoffs of others, the indifference of all? Will it not seem to cast a slur upon the practice of many ages, and especially of our own Church? Is it not something like removing an old and valued treasure, and throwing it into a lumber room, because a new-fashioned taste disapproves it? A parent puts not merely the Bible, but the Catechism into her children's hands. For in the Catechism are articles for children. The parental authority of the University follows this up at a certain age by putting the Articles also into the hands of young men. For as the Catechism prepares the mind for the study of the Scriptures, the Articles are intended to guide him in prosecuting that study by himself. The one is initiative, the others are corrective. And for this reason, the Articles are not set before young men till after a certain time of life: when they may be supposed and required to peruse the Scrip-

tures by themselves, and with less dependence upon oral assistance.

Now it may, indeed, be objected that by making instruction in the Articles a necessary part of our public duties, this intention in the University is equally proclaimed. To a certain degree it is proclaimed. But if we make a certain science indispensable in a course of studies, there is nothing inconsistent, nothing which does not seem natural and fair, in holding open the rudiments of that science at the commencement of the course. And if the science is one on which we not only wish to lay the greatest stress, from our own personal attachment to it, but consider the whole system of our duties to rest on it, surely we cannot give it too great a prominence and importance.

In this point of view, then, the retaining our Articles of faith in the books of matriculation seems most reasonable and most desirable—and not only desirable, but, at this crisis, a great duty, and their removal full of danger. No one can quarrel with this use of them, except those who do not understand our peculiar position, nor the value of the Articles themselves, nor our system of religious instruction. And to these, however we may regard them, we ought not surely to listen.

But there is also another purpose for which the Articles of our faith are placed openly at the gates of the University. They are employed as a test for admission.

There are men who object to all tests of

this kind; who would not allow religious opinion to be a qualification for any privilege; and are anxious to see religion laid aside by common consent, as something which human beings have no right to regard or require. These men are advocates of freedom. They dread to bias a young mind even to truth. They would, indeed, bias us, even in childhood, to notions of honesty and principles of worldly knowledge. And no discipline is too strict, and no exertions too strong, to force this instruction upon our minds the moment we are capable of receiving it. Infant schools, normal schools, adult schools, national education, public superintendents, every kind of channel for conveying useful knowledge into every cottage in the kingdom—these are the favourite dreams and darling improvements of the same men who would not teach a child his Catechism lest it conveyed to him a notion of his Maker. All human knowledge he is to imbibe, at the earliest age, from authority and the pressure of discipline, but the knowledge of his God must be left out till he has acquired so much of that knowledge by himself as to distinguish truth from falsehood without any assistance from man. I know not what notion of God, or of our relations to him, or of our fate in another world, or of a parent's duty to his children, or of the human heart itself, and the necessary conditions of its virtues, that man can have, who can dare, from an exalted position, to deliver to the world a paradox so contempt-

ible, if it were not so wicked. But we have been publicly invited to sanction this principle by the alteration of our own test. And such an invitation alone may surely teach us caution.

There are others, who do not understand the exclusive design of our endowments, nor the expediency of keeping our students apart from members of other sects. They wish to remove the Articles from the matriculation book, in order to admit Dissenters. And sufficient reasons for not admitting them have already been given by the University.

But there are other persons who acknowledge the necessity of a test, and the duty of excluding Dissenters, but are scrupulous on the propriety of the particular test which we employ for the purpose. And with the deliberate determination of the University so fully and publicly recorded, it is evident that any proposed change can have reference only to these scruples. There can be no intention of departing from our principles and widening our entrance. Now a siege, indeed, is not the time for changing our gates. And yet if those gates are rotten it is better to remove them at once, even in the face of the besiegers. But we have found ours, by long experience, admirably constructed for all purposes of defence. They have kept out all our enemies, while they admitted all our friends. They are especially obnoxious to our enemies, from their very strength and solidity. They were received from very wise and very good men, who would be as far from

constructing any thing which could ensnare a reasonable conscience as the most scrupulous of objectors at this day; and who had been forced by dangers and difficulties into the attainment of greater scriptural knowledge, and profounder views of Christian prudence, than exist in the Church at present. They are, moreover, themselves of a nature which requires a peculiar position, and thorough examination, to understand and appreciate.

If, under these circumstances, we find friends who cannot be supposed perfect masters of the subject, hinting objections which coincide with the interested clamours of opponents—if those clamours come from men either avowedly irreligious, or evidently careless on religion, and animated with political jealousy—surely we, as guardians of a great treasure, should pause before we comply or submit to any dictates but those of a Christian conscience. I say a Christian conscience, because this only should be listened to. We are not to adhere to a practice which cannot be indifferent solely from dread of concession—nor even from its expediency and use. It must be maintained because it is right—because the necessity of a test being acknowledged, no other test can be found so good, so wise, so Christian, so safe to the consciences of the young, and so analogous to the institutions of God. If the test of subscription fail in these points it ought to be abandoned.

Let us first consider its object.

It is intended to make a separation between two classes of men. We wish to exclude all those who, if once admitted, might steal their way into our institutions, and divert them from the plan of our founders, to the detriment of the Church—secondly, all those who might, if admitted as Dissenters, claim a right to disseminate their doctrines, and so shake the faith of our students—lastly, all those who might bring to us prejudices and opinions contrary to our system of instruction, and oppose to us a passive resistance, sanctioned by our own toleration. These are to be shut out.

On the other hand, we wish to admit all members of our Church. Now consider, for one moment, what a compound body these form. From the infant at the font to the mind in the last stage of heretical or infidel tendency, previous to an open separation, all are members of our Church who have been admitted into it by baptism. All degrees of ignorance, thoughtlessness, scepticism, and even vice, short of a formal excommunication or secession, are included in our body. Let us not be startled at the view. It is the same with the whole body of the Christian Church, of which we are an integral portion. It must be so, from the very nature and destination of the Church here upon earth. The Church now is in its rudimental form. To wish it otherwise would be to quarrel with the plan of our Maker. It would be inconsistent with the declarations of our blessed Lord, and with his own

most solemn institutions. So long as infants are baptised, and sinners are brought to their Saviour, by repentance and faith, to be made perfect within the walls of the Church by the privileges and blessings of the Church, so long every body of Christians must be made up of degrees of goodness, and exclusion from it rarely take place but by a voluntary act of secession. This fact must, indeed, be kept before us, for it is the source of our greatest difficulties in other cases as well as the present.

There is a great tendency, in the present day, among the best of Christians, to restore, as it is termed, the discipline of the Church, to raise up a Church within a Church—and separate, by some public act, between the good and the bad. It is the yearning of a pure heart for a pure communion. But on earth it is not possible. It would require a miraculous power of discerning hearts, and a superhuman authority for pronouncing on the selection of individuals. We must be content to remain, at present, mixed up with every shade and gradation of human infirmity, without attempting to make the separation which is reserved for another world. And it is better that we are so mixed—better, with our pride and folly, that we are not nursed into conceit by any exclusive title of holiness and faith—better, with our human affections, to be surrounded with objects for our care, than with rivals suspicious of our frailties.

But these various degrees of knowledge and

belief within our own Church, are not all which the framers of our test must prepare to admit. There is another class of persons very numerous and in this country at this moment of great importance, who are not strictly members of our Church, but whom we may safely admit, and are bound to encourage. They have been overlooked by most writers on the subject of Dissent, and yet form its most essential feature.

In every Protestant state where toleration is established—where the resources of the National Church are insufficient to meet the demands of an increasing population—where consequently room is given for the voluntary exertions of Sectarians—where the spirit of religion is active, and yet the people ignorant of the political character of the Church and the nature of schism—where lastly, the right of private judgment is formally recognised, and differences mostly turn upon minor interpretations of the Bible—in all such countries a large floating mass must be created of Christians not finally adhering to any particular communion, and easily detached from it. The experience of a single parish will convince us that the majority of Dissenters around us, are Dissenters more in form than in heart, more in their attendance upon other places of worship, (and that from necessity,) than from any heretical feeling towards the Church of their Fathers. It is not Heresy, that is, a self-willed presumptuous abandonment of spiritual authority, which

has generated the great mass of seeming Dissent, with which we are surrounded. Our poor are too ignorant to be heretics, and our rich, I fear, too much engaged with their wealth to perplex themselves with difficulties in religion. In this excuse no one can include the original founders of sects, nor their present leaders—leaders professing to be acquainted with the nature of Christianity, and the declarations of the Bible. But it does extend to all those, who in the poverty of our own Church have been left with no other resource than the instruction of Sectarians, who cannot distinguish between their doctrines and ours, who have been led ignorantly or even thoughtlessly away from the profession of their childhood, or who have continued in a sect from their birth from deference to the authority of their communion, and in the same spirit of cautious self-distrust which we wish to encourage in our own members. All these, (it is needless to call attention to their numbers,) not having separated from the Church under strong religious feelings, and deciding their adhesion to their communion rather by prejudice or accident than deliberation and research, fluctuate to and fro, with every change of circumstance, and may easily be won into our bosom by removing the causes which detached them. Some of our most valuable members have been drawn from this class—men who either by the design of their parents, or by their own conscientious re-

cognition of our Articles of faith, have been placed under the wing of a Church of England University, not precisely as members of that Church, for no one would wish to exact from a very young man such a formal recantation of his principles, but in a reverential acknowledgment of its excellences, and an honest purpose to comply with the avowed intention of those, by whom the test which they receive is imposed. They are the foster sons of the Church—sure by degrees to pass into its bosom, and received into this University with the confidence which it should always repose in the ingenuous declarations of youth. And if we ask why the final transition into our communion should be imperceptible and gradual, why some barrier is not raised to compel a more formal entrance, we must answer, that the boundaries of Protestant communions must be always more slight and indistinct than the limits of the Heathen and Christian world, or the division of Protestantism and Popery. In the former case a palpable barrier must be raised, because all the education of the Christian is carried on with constant reference to the fact of our having passed it. In the latter case the very principle of Popery, as it requires absolute submission, demands a formal surrender. There is no middle neutral ground between itself and schism. Protestantism permits the right of private judgment, and is for the most part separated on minor distinctions

than points essential to salvation. And therefore the communication of its sects is more easy, and the boundaries less distinct. It would be unwise to wish a change, and perhaps impossible to effect it.

I have ventured on this long statement to point out more clearly the real problem proposed in the construction of a Test. Our ancestors were indeed wiser than we are willing to believe, and they did not fix on the form of subscription instead of the more obvious plan of an oath or declaration without profound research. It was the problem of reconciling the two extremes of great strictness and great laxity —of totally shutting out one class and admitting all others without rigid examination—of recognising men, not so much by any received distinction and formal denomination, as by their secret inclinations and dispositions—of striking a line in theory, which could never be struck in practice, between confirmed sectarians and their accidental followers: and of demanding from the members of their own communion a profession not wholly unworthy of their Christian title, without committing themselves to exclude the very lowest degrees of faith and knowledge and practice. We can scarcely imagine a case where more wisdom and caution could be required. In fact, the scheme appears impracticable: but our ancestors nevertheless attempted it.

The first thing they did was to set aside every

thing like language. They knew the nature of words, and the impossibility of adapting them to any delicate scrutinising process.

In the first place, they classify men in very rude and ill-defined masses.

In the second place, they act not by expression but suggestion; and hence to each mind will present a different sense.

In the third place, they are subjects for reasoning, and no logic is so easy, as that by which for our own purpose we twist and tamper with their meanings.

Fourthly, to be strict they must be numerous, and every fresh word increases the facility of misinterpretation.

Fifthly, they may indeed define individual persons and separate acts, but they cannot define with any thing like accuracy either feelings or duties, or future contingencies, or particular combinations of circumstances, the very things to be contemplated in a test.

Sixthly, they are very liable to change, and a sound form in one generation may become perfectly futile in another.

And lastly, they must be definite, or at least endeavour to appear so, and one standard, for many minds must consequently be faulty and dangerous.

These, and many other reasons, connected with the necessary ambiguity of language, must have induced our ancestors to abandon every thing like an oath or declaration.

But the impossibility of constructing one will appear more clearly from considering the object of the test. It was purely repulsive and exclusive. If it succeeded in deterring the approach of a particular class of minds, its object was accomplished.

Now the University, whether regarded as an institution of the Church, with limits coincident with those of the Church, or as an institution for religious education, requiring certain conditions of its members, in both characters would propose to shut out the same spirit—a spirit of heresy. This word has never yet been accurately defined in theology. No outward act will mark it. And when we try to catch it in a description we must pursue it back into the mind. In strict application of language, it means an abuse of the right of private judgment, originating in a wilful, presumptuous temper, ending in a perverse rejection of spiritual authority, and necessarily coupled with some supposed errors of doctrine. In Popery this was easily seized on; for any denial or distrust of the infallibility of the Church, or any free exercise whatever of private judgment, subjected the offender to the charge. But in Protestantism, which lets loose private judgment, which throws us upon a candid examination of the Church's decrees, which excuses doubts and encourages enquiry, where are we, by any niceties of language, to fix the precise point at which the use ends, and the abuse commences? No young man in a Protestant Church can possibly pur-

sue the study of theology without feeling, in some degree or another, up to a very advanced point of faith and goodness, a tendency to an heretical spirit. He cannot meet difficulties without doubting, nor receive dogmas without distrust, nor have imperfect views of truth without preferring more intelligible errors, nor subject himself implicitly to an authority which denies its own infallibility, and constantly throws him back upon himself to search the Scriptures, and exercise his reason. I ask, in what form of words could the nature of heresy be described, which would not torture the conscience, and tamper with the honesty of the best and worthiest young men within the bosom of the Church. There is, indeed, a point at which the Protestant virtue of enquiring distrust, becomes noxious and dangerous—becomes, in one word, heresy. There is a particular moment in the formation of all our principles, when mere floating thoughts, and suggestions passively admitted, are fixed by an internal power, and hardened into resolutions. It is the moment when thought becomes intention, and weakness passes into guilt. And I ask again, in what form of words this precise state of mind could be exhibited, without embarrassing many with ill-founded scruples, and enticing still more to dishonesty. And let us remember that the conscience is never so acute, nor if injured, injured so irreparably, as at this point, when the mind is approaching to its final decision. It is kept wide awake with the interest of the enquiry,

and the magnitude of the crisis. Before there is but little struggle, and therefore little injury in being overpowered. But an injury now is an injury for ever. Men speak of our tempting to hypocrisy, and challenging deceit. God forbid that we should ever apply to this state of mind a test which should draw off the young from a natural examination of their own hearts, to an examination of a form of language—which should set them upon distorting thoughts, and paring and rasping away words till they brought both into an unnatural conformity, to the ruin of their own peace, and the peril of our institutions.

But how this can be avoided if an efficient verbal test is to be framed, it is difficult to conceive.

To avoid it, our ancestors, who were, indeed, very wise men, though they made little parade of their wisdom, and seldom assigned the reasons for their most remarkable institutions, selected, as a mode of excluding the spirit of heresy, an act which necessarily indicated its absence. This was all they required.

They brought out the great standard of the Church, and demanded a public acknowledgment of it. But the very essence of heresy is the refusal of this acknowledgment. Whether as decrees from spiritual authority, or as the symbol of a particular communion, or as doctrinal truths, the Articles are alike renounced and despised by all those in whom the heretical spirit is fully matured. There could be no room for

mistake, nor temptation to tamper with their conscience. The Articles were placed before them, not more as religious truths than as the symbol of the Church, for the purpose of excluding its enemies; and no treachery could be so gross, or so easily discerned, as to recognise them in that light, at the very time of resolving on their rejection. It was openly to deny what was knowingly cherished in the heart: to profess allegiance while rebellion was meditated—to give a kiss of peace to an acknowledged foe.

The result has been, that the whole mass of matured heresy has been precipitated and thrown off. The very anxiety to obtain a removal of the test proves its repulsive power. The enemy has entirely retired from our gates, and we are now at liberty to throw them open in safety to all that can approach.

The only question which now remains is, if the effect of this same acknowledgment, on the minds of those who are admitted, is evil. And we will not, at present, ask if any wrong interpretations of the practice of subscription have tended to alarm young minds, or to weaken their respect for truth. Let us first ask what is the right interpretation, and if, in this light, it can injure any one. We are too much accustomed, in the present day, to destroy an institution because reasonably or unreasonably some abuse has been connected with it.

An act, like a word, is in itself insignificant. It requires to be construed. And the same laws

of construction are to be observed in either case. But there is one important distinction already alluded to which tends to secure an act, more than words, from the risk of wilful misinterpretation. In an act the whole attention is forcibly and directly turned upon the real point to be examined, the intentions of the parties. No medium is interposed through which we may distort or hide them. And no help is given to evasion. A form of words also, put into our mouths, places us much more in a passive position, than the demand of a voluntary action; and it rouses the conscience less. The distinctions may seem trifling, but they have, in reality, great weight. A man will hesitate to write what he does not scruple to repeat, and an Arab will plan every kind of treachery, but will not eat salt with his victim. So far, then, we provide, as we are bound, a certain check against misconstruction. The conscience is put on self-examination.

The next thing is to attend rigidly to the laws of construction. And these may be reduced to three. Just as we ascertain the senses of words, by etymology, by parallel passages, and by the bearing of the sentence—so we ascertain the meaning of an act by its own internal character; by the comparison of similar actions, and by the circumstances of the case. But inasmuch as the sense must be for the most part arbitrary, and parties may legitimately, though not wisely, attach to an act any signification they choose—and as our honesty in all declarations consists

in using signs in the sense which they suggest to the hearer—it is evident that our chief enquiry is concerned with the intention of the test. It is, however, most important to show, upon all these grounds, and conformably to the strictest rules of plain interpretation, that only one legitimate sense can be attached to a subscription at matriculation—namely, that of a negation of heresy.

In the first place, if we take the act to pieces, it is composed intrinsically of two parts—subscription, and the thing subscribed. The former may be, and is at times, employed, with a positive explanation added, to signify the denial of a fact, as well as its acknowledgment. It may be used, and is used, without straining, to signify any degree of approval, from the very lowest point of *non-dissent* to the highest of full identity of sentiment. And it is so used in all cases where it is required, from any number of men in whom perfect uniformity is impossible, except in the single point of the absence of intention to oppose. Subscription to the laws of many societies is taken in this sense. The degree of assent is limited by the very nature of the case. And there is nothing in the act of subscription by which this power of limitation can be excluded.

But the nature of the Articles also tends to imply this limitation. They are correctives for studying the Bible, and their whole force and value cannot possibly be understood till the study has been completed. They are buoys

and beacons to guide us while we are sounding on the same shore where they are placed. Some doubt and hesitation of assent is therefore necessarily implied in the very fact of their reception. And their own denial of infallibility in the Church effects this limitation likewise. No such qualification would naturally enter into subscription to the Dogmas of the Church of Rome; but in every Protestant Church, the degree of assent required is necessarily restricted, not to any fixed amount, but, what is more important, by the conscience and attainments of the subscriber—Our faith in the Articles must increase with the increase of our knowledge, and in proportion as we discover their consistency with reason and the Bible. At the first commencement, therefore, of our studies, it must be slight—almost the slightest possible.

Looking, then, to the very nature of the case, to what may be termed the etymology of subscription, it cannot possibly be interpreted to mean any fixed amount of assent, much less of unqualified comprehension. It descends with every descent of Christian knowledge, and from no one can it propose to demand more than he is able to give.

But by the second law of interpretation, by comparing the parallel cases of subscription, we arrive at the same result. It is an universal rule that by every fresh application of a word, its general intrinsic meaning becomes limited. The most common words are the most abstract,

that is, have the the fewest ideas attached to them. And the most common acts are the least definite in their meaning. No sense peculiarly belongs to them, but that which is common and enters into every case. But it is not possible that the same degree of assent should be required, because it cannot be given, in the case of ministers who are to teach, of young men who have only been taught, and of boys who have yet to learn, the great doctrines of the Articles. The common notion, therefore, which enters into the act of subscription in all these three cases can be only the lowest. An additional demand is made at each successive stage and the increase is explicitly marked, not only by a difference in the words of the requisition, but in the means provided by the University to ensure compliance with it, and by the very nature of the case. No clergyman could suppose that in his subscription the same low standard is fixed as for students at their entrance here. Nor can any honest student put his name to the Articles, when he takes his degree, with the same ignorance or indifference as he may at his matriculation. The natural and intrinsic meaning, then, of subscription, upon all received rules of interpretation, is the very lowest assent the mind can give, short of determined hostility and fixed Heresy. Its secondary meaning is in each case to be ascertained by the evident intention of the party imposing it, sometimes by their expressed intention. But as no such intentions are ex-

pressed at matriculation, and the implied intentions actually coincide with the lowest interpretation above mentioned, we are bound (I do not say we are at liberty)—but we are bound to assume the lowest.

For if we look to the circumstances of the case, it is impossible that either in the wish or the contemplation of the University more should be required. The University is acting for the Church. It cannot pretend, it has no right to exclude from her institution, any whom the Church would not exclude from her communion. But it is not ignorance, or doubt, or lukewarmness, or distrust of her authority—it is a fixed apostacy only—which take the members of the Church from beneath her wing. She looks down with the eye of a most indulgent parent, like the Being in whose image she is formed, upon the child and the sage, the weak and the strong, the just and the unjust. She welcomes even a returning or hesitating wanderer. She throws off none, and those who quit her must quit her by their own act. Is not the Church content, as the terms of communion upon earth, with negative, external, even wavering and uncertain adherence? And can the University demand more.

But her view of education puts the same limit to the demand. She provides and enforces a subsequent system of instruction in these very Articles. How is it possible for her to require knowledge before it is implanted?

She fixes the time for subscription, not by the attainments of the individual, not respectively to his faith or knowledge, but by his age. How can this criterion be fit, unless the act required be such as any one can perform safely who is not unwilling to perform it at all? She asks no question—wisely most wisely refrains from insisting on any previous instruction—does not even provide that the Articles should be read beforehand, as on other occasions—looks on the act as a form which imposes no grave or solemn obligation—never turns upon the student with the reproach of a broken vow, but treats the act as an injunction of her own, which is become almost unnecessary and nugatory, since its end has been obtained already by the withdrawal of all who would profane it. How can this coldness and silence be reconciled with the notion that subscription is interpreted by the imposer into a grave and deliberate declaration of belief in all the difficulties of Christianity?

Undoubtedly this view of the practice will startle many minds. We have been long accustomed to hear it confused with a theological examination, to which it neither bears nor ought to bear the slightest resemblance; which no society in its senses could think of instituting without the certainty of previous instruction, nor of conducting in such a manner, nor of extending at such an age, so far into the depths of revelation.

We acquire also as we advance in Christian knowledge so profound a reverence for the Articles of our faith, that we can scarcely bear to see them touched with any sentiment short of unlimited attachment. There is also a feeling of awe inspired by every declaration connected with religion. But subscription is not an oath. No extraordinary appeal is made to the Searcher of hearts. The obligation is that of simple Truth, though of Truth in a subject of religion. It is incurred rather before men than God. It binds to no future conduct, speaks only of our state at present, exacts nothing, because it measures nothing; is enforced by that spiritual authority which we are bound to obey; and which leads us even compulsorily [b] to so many other acts connected with religion; with a full sense of our imperfection, and yet without fear of tampering with our conscience. A child is taught his Catechism—a boy is placed before his Bible, our students are brought to their prayers, all the offices and duties of religion are laid constantly before minds incapable as yet of responding to them fully—and all this honestly and rightly, because in these cases, ignorance of

[b] It may be a great question how far the University has a right to abolish the practice of subscription. It was imposed not by herself but by the Church—And as the Minister of the Church she is bound to submit to this and other regulations. It is most difficult to ascertain the sentiments of the Church in its present state. But I conceive till they are ascertained and communicated to us, we have no more right to interfere in the subject, than any servant by his own act to supersede the express injunctions of his master.

wrong is in itself entire absolution. Absence of the consciousness of treachery is all that is required to make the act innocent and safe. The fear of having offended and the desire for pardon prove that no offence has been committed.

Surely there is nothing in all this to offend any Christian; no deceit practised on our opponents; no stumbling block placed before our friends.

Let us interpret this act as all such acts ought to be interpreted, and every thing is simple and clear.

But—it is urged—a wrong, or at least an indistinct, account has been given of the obligation of subscription: and we are asked, therefore, to abolish the act, and substitute some form of words, or to subjoin an interpretation of our own, fixing the amount of our demand. Surely the natural course is, to correct the error, not alter our practice: especially if it is sanctioned by the wisdom of so many years, and its removal, at this crisis, would be connected with so many dangers. And in endeavouring to correct the error we should also remember that distinctness and precision is not possible, where our subjects are feelings and resolutions, and our medium language. It seems impossible, perfectly impossible, to draw up any form of words which should describe the state of mind which we wish to exclude, without enticing many, who ought not to approach, to twist and pervert them to hypocrisy: and without raising many points which

must irritate and wound the conscience of the best among our own members.

No other mode suggests itself for fixing the right interpretation with adequate accuracy, and yet without danger, but general discussion. Many years have passed away since the question was last agitated. And it is probable that differences of opinion now arise only from our not having thought on it.

Under this impression, my dear—, I have complied, most reluctantly and most painfully, with your wish, to join yourself and others in stating the opinions of individuals, and thus promoting more general enquiry. I can scarcely describe my repugnance to publishing any thing whatever, much less any thing so crude, upon so grave a subject. But in all such cases it is better, perhaps, to suggest thoughts, with the warning that they are hasty and ill-digested, than to give them a more formal shape. Will you take what I have written, with the same qualification and excuse as if it had been thrown out in accidental conversation—not tying me down to every word and letter in a question which requires so much nicety to avoid mistake; and allowing me the reserve of submitting myself, if any thing is wrong, as I do now submit myself, most cordially, to the correction of better and wiser men.

I am, yours truly,

WILLIAM SEWELL.

Exeter College,
Nov. 17, 1834.

POSTSCRIPT

NOTE.

THE following observations were written and printed at the suggestion of some very valued friends, at a time when it seemed probable that we might each be called on rather suddenly to pronounce an opinion on the question of subscription. When this became less likely it seemed better to suppress the publication entirely. Unnecessary controversy is never desirable: and it must always appear officious to intrude opinions, where so many persons are more capable of giving them. I am now induced reluctantly to change this intention by the advice of others, who assure me that at least I have written nothing which can give pain to any one.

As some obscurity has been pointed out in the last pages, it may be worth while to restate here, that the only interpretation which seems legitimately applicable to the act of Subscription is the Negation of decided Heresy—meaning by Heresy, a deliberate abandonment of the Church, and submission to a separate authority.

ERRATA.

Page 8, for unenlightened, *read* enlightened.
38 for truths not commonly, *read* truths now commonly.
60 for Ministers, *read* Minister.

POSTSCRIPT

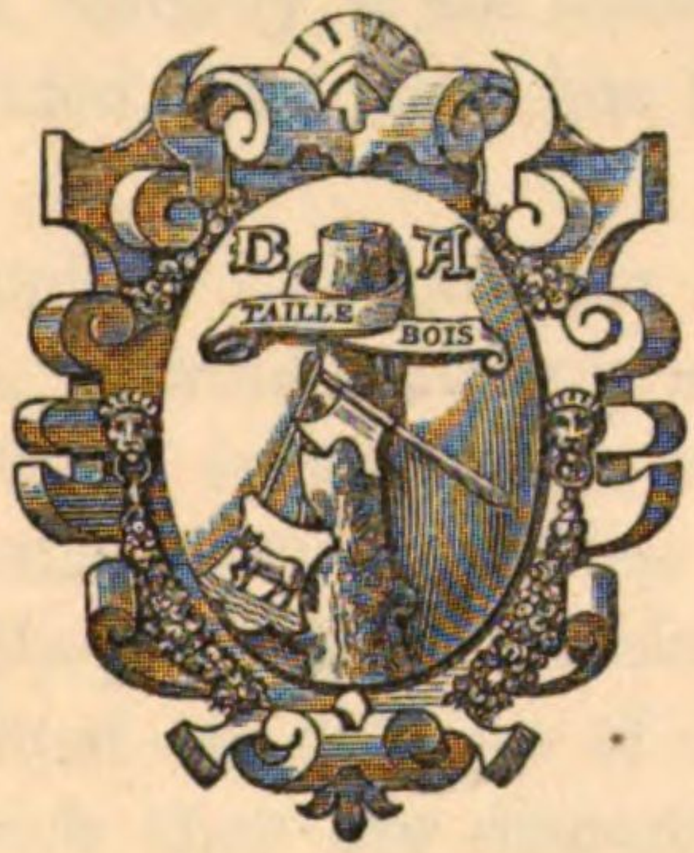
TO

THOUGHTS ON SUBSCRIPTION.

BY WILLIAM SEWELL, M. A.

FELLOW AND TUTOR

OF EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD.



OXFORD: D. A. TALBOYS;

LONDON: C, AND J. RIVINGTON; J. BOHN;

AND H. G. BOHN.

M DCCC XXXV.

POSTSCRIPT.

I HAVE always thought that a full and fair discussion, was the only mode of arriving at the true theory of Subscription. If the following principles are correct, they present a view of it, not opposed to those of others, but going beyond them, and comprehending them all. They are the principles, on which, as an individual, I grounded my vote, and I am therefore very ready to state them finally and explicitly.

I do this the more anxiously, because I believe they meet the real difficulty which is felt by objectors, directly, if not satisfactorily, and in a more decided tone than has been sometimes assumed.

And though it is impossible to illustrate or prove them, without entering into discussions, for which there is no time now, it does seem essential to the safety of all that we value in the world that they should be manfully put forward and maintained—in defiance of the follies of the day, to which they are diametrically opposed, and in this place, which alone in the world seems now to hold out the hope of combining a sound philosophy with a humble and heartfelt Christianity.

I wish to take the practice of subscription in its lowest and seemingly most objectionable form—that form in which it has undoubtedly

been administered in many cases,—which comprehends all others,—which, I believe, the framers and enforcers of our statutes have really contemplated—and which, I trust, we shall never change by admitting any higher interpretation, and rendering it at all equivalent to an examination in theology.

I think subscription in the case of ignorance, where it is combined with docility, (and ignorance cannot exist in that spirit of heresy, of which subscription is the practical denial,)—not only excusable and expedient,—but most highly reasonable—thoroughly honest, and sanctioned by every authority, whether of law, of logic, of nature, or revelation. I suppose the University standing over a boy, and peremptorily on its own responsibility, and the responsibility of his parents and guardians, without stooping to argue the question, or to deal with him as capable of thought, requiring a full and unreserving submission to its authority; as in matters of discipline, so in matters of thought, and especially in matters of religion—and in this last case without yet condescending to enquire if its doctrines are understood, or even known.

I am aware this is to state the case in an offensive and repulsive form. But I wish to state it broadly and boldly. When follies are spreading over a nation, they are not to be driven out by any paltry compromises and equivocations. They must be met face to face.

That subscription does imply some such sub-

mission is evident from this, that no one will subscribe who is finally resolved not to submit. This submission is, I conceive, not to the Church alone, of whose constitution and privileges a boy may know but little, but to a Power whose existence he recognizes, as a subject recognizes the existence of the Power of the legislature; which he cannot exactly define, nor fix its seat, but in whose hands he knows that he is placed; and whose authority and personality is felt and acknowledged universally, though in each several case it may be composed of different elements. It may be his parents; it may be the University itself as a learned body. It may be the mere "genius loci." It may be religious men, whose example he follows. It may be his own reason and conscience, assenting to the truth of doctrines, and the authority of the Church. And undoubtedly the authority of the Church, however vaguely perceived, will enter largely into all. But in every case of subscription there is the boy on one hand, and a Power on the other, whose authority over him—and authority not merely in conduct, but in matters of speculation and belief, he recognizes by subscribing to its doctrines, whether they are known or not.

With respect to such a practice I wish to propose at once the following assertions for the consideration of others. It would take volumes and years to illustrate them—and perhaps in an age of scepticism and wilfulness no proof could

gain them admission into the minds of men in general. But they should still be stated.

1. That in the communication of all knowledge a blind implicit submission of the reason, precisely the same as that which is so much condemned in subscription, is given, and must be given, to ten thousand unknown principles and doctrines—some hidden in the teacher's mind—some secretly contained in the propositions we listen to—some absolutely unknown, yet absolutely necessary to the connection of all our reasonings, and which if stated openly we should find had been perpetually disputed, and, except to mature and profound understandings, were perfectly unintelligible.

2. That without such a submission all attempts to educate are futile. We can harden our mind as well as our heart, and when this is done no instruction can possibly reach us. Hence in all instruction the submission is *implied*. It is required to be *expressed* only when doubts are entertained of the willingness to concede it. Thus allegiance to the legislature is the condition universally required and supposed in all subjects of a state. But the oath of allegiance is not exacted till a rebellion is suspected. And if we were resolved to maintain a set of grammatical principles in opposition to another system, and anticipated a defiance of our authority in this point, it would be necessary to apply a test, and require subscription to our grammars before they were understood or learnt, just as

we now in the face of so much dissent demand subscription to our articles of religion.

3. That this demand of submission to personal authority is justifiable and necessary, not only in conduct, where no one disputes it, but in opinions also—subject only to the necessary limitations which the very difference of the subject to be controlled implies. And in religious opinions most of all, where the interest of the instructed is most important, the conviction of the instructor most firm, and the duty most imperatively demanded by the express word of God and the whole analogy of reason and religion.

4. That the propriety of applying difficult and unintelligible dogmas as a test of faith, and requiring implicit submission to the personal authority that propounds them previous to admission to education is sanctioned by the express, systematic, and uniform practice of our Saviour himself. We require much more illustration than we yet possess of the rules by which our Lord regulated his instruction of the Jews. But let us read the Gospels, especially the first six chapters of St. John, attentively with this key, and we shall find the principles of subscription enforced for precisely the same object, and in precisely the same manner as by ourselves.

5. That the practice of our Lord is not only a sanction but a guidance to the practice of the Church. The Church is left upon the earth as his personification. It stands in the same relation to the world as our Lord to the Jews—and

to its own willing members as our Lord to his disciples. If He taught publicly though in parables all who came to hear him; it should continue its ordinances and proceed in its promulgation of truth whether understood or not before all comers. If He required a test of faith before he admitted men among his immediate disciples, we may require it also. If this was necessary to Him that he might not be embarassed with false followers, surrounded by discord, compromised by false teaching, and exhausted in teaching when all teaching was useless—it is for the same reasons equally necessary to us. If He claimed submission to his authority on his own personal responsibility, the Church, and the organs of the Church, may do so likewise. The guarantee of the authority of the Church is to the world now, the same as of the authority of our Lord to the believing and unbelieving Jews. It is the coincidence of its doctrines with the declared word of God, the natural feelings and expectations of our heart satisfied by its existence and its promises, its works, not works of any separate organ to which its name may have been occasionally attached, but the piety, purity, and wisdom, and sufferings of all those its members, who attested its doctrines, and constituted its real body. If doubt rests on the outward form in which the Church appears, so doubt rested on the mission of our Lord, veiled as his divine nature was in a despised and humiliated frame. The parallel is complete, and the obligation assuredly binding.

6. I wish to assert, not as if a better sanction were required, or could be found in nature, but as tracing the whole analogy of the practice—that the plan of requiring us to take into our hands, spontaneously, or passively, even reluctantly, as the case may be, whole masses of truth, of which we do not see the meaning, nor understand the extent, and which may without our knowledge involve consequences most repugnant at some future time to our feelings or supposed interests, is not a human institution only, but the carefully elaborated plan of God in nature, who has constructed the human mind precisely on this principle—who by the laws of habit, by instinct, by association, by the forms of language, by our tendency to generalize, by the influence of passion, even by our innate indolence, and timidity, does contrive that in our early years, we should thus take in nearly all the knowledge which is afterwards evolved—and take it in, wrapt up in general laws of which we do not understand the application; and in practical principles which act by instinct blindly, and without any mixture of reason.

7. That this plan is absolutely necessary in the formation of reasoning beings out of nothing—such a formation as we see proceeding round us in this world; that in no other way could the helplessness and ignorance of the young be protected by the experience of the old; and that to set it aside, and introduce the principle of dealing with children as free independent agents,

either in conduct or in opinion, would be as repugnant to the facts of Nature, as destructive to all the safeguards of society.

8. That age is no criterion of childhood or manhood in religion. That the disposition of heart and mind which constitutes us competent judges in religious matters cannot possibly be expected to exist at the age at which young men are admitted to the University. And therefore that to deal with them in any other light than as minors and pupils would be a most flagrant absurdity, and necessarily involve their ruin.

9. That the submissive temper required of them in subscription, is the same as that which our Saviour required of all those who came to him before he would work his miracles or receive them as his disciples—that consequently it cannot be any thing unworthy of a Christian, or even of a reasoning being.

10. That it is in one word, faith—faith in a personal authority of which we do not exactly understand the nature, nor are able to state either the limits, or the reasons for our submission—which is obscure and undefined, and subject to much doubt, just as our Saviour's divine authority was clouded over and perplexed in the eyes of the Jews by his appearance in a degraded form—which nevertheless is bound at the commencement of instruction to maintain a despotic command in the consciousness of its own truth; of which truth none but itself can be the judge, because its witness is within, just as our Lord in

a similar position appealed to no one but himself, for the evidence of his mission, except in cases, where by condescending to reason, he meant to testify against his hearers, and not for them.

11. That this maintenance of despotic command and full assurance is necessary in all teachers, for their own sake—but most especially in the Church and its organs for the sake of religious faith over the whole world—that it is not possible as some suppose, to have a Christian faith in perfection, without maintaining its facts and doctrines with the most unshrinking confidence; that we cannot believe a truth, and yet hold that its contrary is possible; and that we cannot think a truth important and good, without wishing, if we are good Christians, to promulgate and enforce it.

12. That moreover there is no evidence of truth so strong, so easy, and so logically conclusive as this uncompromising demand for unlimited acquiescence, when made by a competent authority; and that to permit doubt excites resistance, as it justifies suspicion—It is therefore highly expedient and full of benefit to the instructed themselves.

13. That no fear can be entertained from such a principle, of crushing human reason or reverting to the despotism of Popery—Since discussion is permitted within the bosom of the Church, proofs are offered, attacks are repelled, and reasoning is dispensed with, only in those who are not yet capable of reasoning at all.

14. That a spirit of scepticism and doubt which, instead of believing till facts are disproved, doubts till proof is given, is an unnatural, a vicious, a miserable, an unprofitable, an illogical, and a most degrading frame of mind. Unnatural, because all the instinct and warnings of Nature proceed in just the opposite direction—vicious, because whether in the pain it causes, or the innate repugnance of our moral sense to it, or the sins to which it leads and with which it is universally accompanied, or its direct violation of God's command, or its woful effects upon the world, or its contradiction to the real relations of man—it bears on it all the stamps of a most deadly depravity. It is most miserable from the distraction which it causes, and the unsettling of all fixed principles in the mind—witness the confession of Hume—most unprofitable because it strips the mind of knowledge, leaving it cold and naked, and desolating the whole region of its fancies and reasonings and affections. It is most illogical—because it implies a lamentable ignorance of the real nature of reasoning, and the origin and distinction of truths. It is most degrading, because it takes man at once from all relations with other things and other men, reduces him to his own poor and paltry experience, paralyzes all energy of mind, robs him of all knowledge except that which a merciful Nature forces upon him in despite of himself, that he may be compelled to feed his hunger and cover his nakedness. But it is degrading most of all,

because it shuts from his eyes the whole spiritual world—with all its glories and grandeur—not merely the world of Christians, but that spiritual world of Nature which a good mind discovers and creates by the power of unsuspecting belief out of the rude forms and hints of matter; the world of hope, of memory, of poetry; all that adds dignity to life, and raises the existence of man to something like the privileges of mind. I would rather, infinitely rather (and it would be infinitely nearer the truth,) abandon myself to all the superstitions of a child and a savage—believe in ghosts, and witches, and fairies, people the whole earth with visionary beings, and receive in unsuspecting confidence all the marvels and miracles of the weakest credulity, than cut off from the world of my thoughts all that I could not prove, and might bring myself to doubt, and see nothing within me but my own experience, and nothing without, but lumps of senseless matter.

15. That faith, even the blind, weak, mechanical faith implied in Subscription, is a great virtue—that it is the germ, the only germ of that perfect Christian faith which realizes to itself the whole extent of an unseen world—and lives upon earth as in the presence of God, with another eye than that of sense, and another heart than that of flesh—that as the germ of this perfect faith it is the source of all real strength, the sign of all true virtue, the beginning of all true goodness—the spring of the highest faculty of the

intellect; the sheet anchor of the human mind; the realization of all the aspirings of the best and greatest of men, whether heathen or Christian, philosophers or heroes--that it is the great command of nature, evidenced by all the laws of our reason, and by the miseries attached to its rejection—that it is the foundation of all society, civil or political, domestic or religious—that it is the necessary condition of all knowledge—and the end to which we must come after all enquiry, when weary and desperate and appalled by the horrors of thick darkness around us, we sink down with but one terrified prayer to Almighty God, that he would take us wholly to himself, guide us, form us, dwell in us, teach us in all things—be in fact ourselves, for that if he leaves us for a moment, we must perish for ever and ever.

16. And therefore to exact this faith from our students is wholly right, to discard it would be a great folly—and to ridicule it is a fearful crime—a great folly, and a fearful crime at any moment and in any place—but in such an age and such a country as this, when the foundations of society are breaking up in a spirit of wilfulness and license; when the very existence of Christianity is doubted because all men will think for themselves on it; when all the standards of faith have been removed or contemned in the rest of the world; and when our own old and venerated and venerable Institutions stand, the last strong holds of its defence; solid, but alone and

amidst ruins—to shake it from its hold here upon the minds of the English youth, whose first thought and noblest ambition once was to be loyal to their King and true to their God—I do ask, I do most seriously and solemnly ask, of all who will look into their own hearts and listen to the biddings of their Saviour, and see the history of all such acts written throughout past generations in letters of fire and figures of blood—I ask if we can dare to do what never yet was done without a sure and fearful expiation from the hands of Almighty God—without madness or misery, in a man—and anarchy and ruin, in a nation. Shall we resolve to take off the moral gravitation of our nature.

I do not charge those who in this place propose to abandon subscription, with any indifference to religion—or unsoundness of faith. Very very far from it. Many men—all men hold opinions, of whose full extent and implication they may not be conscious. And they will permit those opinions to be controverted when necessary, in the very strongest language, without supposing any censure applied to their personal principles and habits. They are acting I firmly believe from a candid, complying, benevolent temper of mind, which shrinks from all unnecessary altercation, is anxious to abandon every seeming abuse—to concede as much as possible to opponents, and above all to avoid every appearance of tampering with the honesty of the young.

But even good feelings are not to be indulged without thought and caution. Let us think at least before we act. Let us examine the real grounds of a practice not of this day's growth, but sanctioned by many generations, by men not wholly foolish or wholly without honesty of purpose. We may differ in the views we take of it —as we must on any subject, which has but recently become the subject of enquiry. But I cannot doubt that the more we enquire the more we shall agree. And I venture to express this hope, because I commenced enquiry on my own part with a decided inclination to remove Subscription. And I would now sooner cut off my right hand than be in any way instrumental in such an act. Every hour of examination has removed some scruple, and brought out some new confirmation of its wisdom and value. Only give us time, and we may yet all of us reunite, few as they are who differ among us, in maintaining the nature of our test, as we did unite last year in requiring some test to be imposed.

In a few days the House of Lords will be called on to legislate on this question.

Are they prepared to say :

1. That a boy shall take nothing upon trust either in practice or religion.

2. That faith is not a virtue, necessary for the purpose of education.

3. That no personal authority shall be exerted in the diffusion of truth.

4. That the authority which sanctions as truths the Articles of our Church is not sufficient to justify our firm and entire belief in them.

5. That in a question thus involving the most abstruse laws of mind, and the theory of religious education, the decision of the University of Oxford should not rather be trusted, than any individual who may think the system wrong, or who may not be able to explain it.

W. SEWELL.

Exeter College,
June 20th, 1835.

NOTES.

Note I.

It is lamentable that some one thoroughly conversant with the English law, as well as with human nature, does not at once set before the country the principles, which up to the present day, both politically and in jurisprudence, just as in morals and religion, pervaded that very remarkable system, on which the whole fabric of society rests—the construction of Persons. It should be shown that just as the richness and value of language consists in the formation of groups of ideas, which separately have no independent existence, so the safety and goodness of all societies depends on the formation of abstract persons—that is, persons not defined by the material body, nor the individual will within it, but composed of the actions of one man, and the will of another—and sometimes the reason of a third—and sometimes of the conflicting wills and reasons of many—sometimes of the concentrated prudence of a bare majority—sometimes of a mechanical compliance in one body, guaranteed by the moral authority of past generations, and habitual experience. Thus in the present instance—there are two persons—neither of whom have any tangible visible existence which we can strictly define, and yet both are very real—first, the boy directed and governed by the will of his parents or guardians; and recognized as a person not by himself, because if his father refused we should not admit him—but in conjunction with his father. And

secondly, the University,—and here again not the University alone, confined to the body of its present members, but guaranteed and supported by all that authority which is conferred on it from former fame, and most of all by the will, and reason, and wisdom of those who have attested the excellence of our Articles. So it is with the personality of the Legislature—so with the personality of the Church, which does not cease to exist, or to claim our duties, and exercise its rights, because its bodily appearance may be for a time suspended, and we may entertain some doubt as to its real presence in those material forms which we may hastily and wrongly combine for the purpose of bringing it into action. We do not see these things now—but our ancestors, our poor deluded ancestors, whom we so ridicule and despise, did see, and did act up to them. It may have been from instinct—but it was an instinct coincident with the most profound philosophy, the most elevated fancy, and the most sober judgment. Every step which the spirit of the day is now taking is destroying some one or another of these abstract and created personalities—which are formed and recognized by God and nature, and by Jesus Christ himself, as well as by fictions of law; which in fact are no fictions, but some of the noblest and best realities in the world—the only things which imitate upon earth the realities of heaven; the only things which raise us from our low and miserable grovellings in a material world to the contemplation, and love, and respect of better and holier objects; composed as far as possible of all that is good in man, and released from all that is evil; spirits in one word—moral, and sentient, and acting spirits, purged from the dross of matter. Perhaps nothing has so perplexed the question of Subscription as our not understanding this system. We know nothing of persons except by their bodies. We are in fact a dark age—dark, not in our own conceit, or in our discernment of

fancied evils; but in all that regards real wisdom, and the moral constitution of man. It is an age of sensualism and materialism, in every part of our practice, our philosophy, and our religion. And if the University of Oxford does not at once apply itself to raise our views and purge our eyes, there is no other hope of saving it.

NOTE II.

In the beginning of St. John's Gospel three cases are described of persons brought under our Lord's eyes, as candidates, if I may so express it, for admission among his disciples. Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, and the Jews, who followed him after the miracle of the loaves. It is very interesting to observe the principle on which our Lord proceeded with them. Nicodemus, evidently a man of education, and more than half inclined to place himself under the authoritative instruction of our Saviour, came to him by night, expressing his firm belief that there was something divine in his mission. "We know thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Now what is our Lord's reply. He immediately propounds to him a most difficult doctrine, one evidently entirely beyond the scope of his comprehension. And this without attempting to argue it, but resting it solely on his own authoritative dictum. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus then hesitates, seems to imply that he has no notions of possibility beyond the experience of his own senses, (which is, in fact, the real character of all faithlessness), and enquires into the truth of the statement with a very sceptical spirit.

What is our Saviour's answer? He restates the same doctrine in still more obscure and startling terms: not obscure perhaps to us, who are familiar with the illustration of them, but certainly most dark and enigmatical to a Jew; at least as dark and enigmatical as any of our Articles can be to a young man educated in a Christian country, where the theology of the Articles, though not in a polemical form, must have been constantly brought before him. Nicodemus still doubts; and then our Lord, continuing to act upon the same principle, states to him, in the most concise, and, let me add, most perplexing form, all the main and most profound doctrines of Christianity, not, let us remember, with a view to persuade and instruct him against his will, but to place them before him as a witness against him: to leave him to himself: to try if his docility and submission would stoop to receive our Lord as his master, though his doctrines were not comprehended, and if he still resisted, to exclude him. I will venture to ask if this is not precisely a case (it is only one out of many) in which our Lord places before those who came to him for instruction articles of faith which they do not comprehend, and before he receives them requires their adhesion to his person, and their entire submission to his authority, (an authority in these very matters of opinion, these theological dogmas,) in the very face of all their seeming contradictions. The sign of such submission, in the case of our Saviour, was the following him, and acknowledging him as a teacher; the sign which we have been compelled to select in the act of subscription. But if subscription is wrong because it expresses submission, and the absence of all unwillingness to receive dogmas which we do not comprehend, and which consequently are the same as if they were stated in a language we had never learnt, or were never heard at all; does not the acknowledgement of any person as our instructor, in

the face of similar unknown and unintelligible dogmas, state precisely the same thing, and lie open, therefore, to the same objection.

But in the sixth chapter of St. John there is another instance of the same kind. A great multitude had followed our Lord after the miracle of the loaves, "not, as it is stated, because they saw the miracles, but because they did eat of the loaves and were filled;" that is, not in a feeling of faith and implicit surrender of themselves to our Lord, to be dealt with as he chose, but from a low sensual motive. Our Lord tells them to believe on him; does not argue with them, but requires their belief implicitly. They indicate their unwillingness to do this by demanding a sign: "What sign shewest thou then, that we may see and believe thee." Then our Lord propounds to them a very difficult doctrine, which they evidently do not understand, and could not understand then without divine illumination, however clear it may seem to us who have been familiar with its illustrations from our childhood. "The Bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." The Jews take this in a low material sense, and reply, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." Then our Saviour restates the principle in a more strikingly perplexing form. "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." At this the Jews murmur; and then our Lord proceeds once more to restate the very points which excited the doubt, restate them solely on his own authority, declaring that the reception of them, unintelligible as they were, upon his authority, was the test of their being destined for his disciples, and adding the further enigma: "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Upon this the Jews strive together: and then our Saviour closes with again restating the facts, and in the

most unintelligible manner possible: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." It was after this that he explained to his disciples, to those who were not repelled by such hard doctrines, the key to their interpretation. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life."

There is another instance of the same process pursued by our Saviour, and varied only by the difference of circumstance—in the woman of Samaria. In her the faith required is found to exist, and our Saviour deals with her accordingly—Faith, I mean, in the person and authority of the Instructor; submission to him in dogmas which are not understood, or not yet developed, as distinguished from belief and reasoning reception of the dogmas themselves. Our Lord, as a perfect stranger, meets the Samaritan woman at the well. He tests her faith in the first place, by asking her to give him drink. If instead of possessing a meek, gentle and submissive spirit, which is the real meaning of faith as a character of mind, she had been haughty and violent, she would at once have refused to assist a Jew; as the Samaritans on another occasion refused permission to our Lord to pass through their cities. Instead of refusing she seems to express merely surprise at the request. Our Saviour then calls her attention to himself personally; "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." The woman evidently does not understand the words, but still expresses surprise rather than doubt; and by her allusion to "our father Jacob who gave us the well," she evinces in another instance a portion of that docile

affectionate spirit, which willingly submits itself with reverence to the authority of its superiors. Our Lord then, as in the former instance, restates the fact which was to test the faith by its tendency to excite doubt, and restates it in a more difficult and problematic form: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The woman, without in the slightest degree comprehending the doctrine, yet catching at it merely as a promise of good, and willing to embrace it, replies, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." And this is enough for our Saviour. He immediately proceeds to give her a sign, to confirm his own authority, and justify her confidence. Jesus saith unto her, "Go, call thy husband," and proves to her, as she herself confesses, that he is a prophet. Her next words still further indicate the faith and teachableness of her character. She asks for information respecting the difference of religious opinions between the Jews and the Samaritans. And this our Lord then answers in the most plain and simple way. Concluding all with the express declaration, "I am the Messiah." For other illustrations of the same principle, I refer to Mark vii; Galat. i, 8; John ii, 21: x, 19; Acts xvii, 11. I do not think it possible to imagine three cases more directly parallel to the position of the University on the one hand, and the boy who asks for admission for the purpose of being instructed on the other.

For indeed we cannot understand innumerable passages in the Gospels without bearing in mind that wherever no distinct evidence of the faith, that is, of this docile unreserved submission to the personal authority of our Lord in matters of opinion, as distinguished from assent to their reasonableness, or mere external conformity to his orders—wherever no evidence

of this kind was previously given, there the first address of our Saviour was always *repellent*. It was meant to be so. Nothing could be more repellent to the sensual, ignorant Jews, dwelling in visions of temporal glory, than the beginning of the sermon on the Mount. His mode of teaching in parables; his denunciation of the sins of the Pharisees in the house of a Pharisee; his replies to those who came to him, "Let the dead bury their dead; the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay to his head; sell all that thou hast, and take up thy cross and follow me;" the very fact of his calling his Apostles, keeping them with him in ignorance of the real character, and nature of his kingdom, till after his ascension—requiring them even to preach the Gospel when it is evident they neither understood its doctrines nor entered into its spirit, all these are instances of tests applied to discover the same temper of mind, abandonment of self in subjection to the personal authority of our Lord; and at the same time to throw off all who did not possess it.

And it should be observed (and the principle is still more obvious in those tests of the same faith which preceded our Lord's miracles) the test was always applied precisely to the point in which the difficulty was felt. I allude to this, because it so completely justifies the practice of making opinions and dogmas, the subjects on which the faith is to be exerted, previous to admission into a body whose great end and object is the control of opinions, and the inculcation of dogmas. No act evidencing docility in general, could evidence it for our purpose so satisfactorily, and in a manner so perfectly conformable to our Lord's practice as subscription to articles of religion, in which we profess to require conformity, and purpose to educate our students.

When our Saviour worked a miracle, unless some

previous proof of faith had been shown, he directly required of the sick person what must have appeared an impossibility. If it is a man with a withered arm, he requires him to stretch it forth; if he is palsied, to rise up and walk. When the rich man comes to him, he bids him sell all that he has. When the son, evidently full of affection for his father, asks leave to go and bury him, the reply, seemingly so harsh and stern, is, "Let the dead bury the dead." And when he suspects unwillingness to submit the reason to his control, as in the case of Nicodemus, he states the greatest mysteries of his Gospel, almost the very Articles of our own Church in a condensed form, and expects the reception of them,

It is because we do not see the value and bearing of this principle of faith upon all the parts and circumstances of human nature, that we are startled at the selection of it by God as a condition for admission into his Church. We ought to exert ourselves to procure in the present day, a more full consideration of this subject. But there is one striking and sufficient justification of the practice which forces itself prominently on our notice. Is not this gentle, self-abandoning spirit, spontaneously, and almost unthinkingly surrendering itself to receive and be moulded by the opinions of another power, whatever they may be, absolutely necessary in all cases where knowledge or goodness is to be communicated? Where actions are to be regulated, do we not enforce and obtain in all well-conditioned minds, such a passive external submission to our will? And where thoughts are to be the subject of control, is it not absolutely necessary, and as common as education itself, to require a similar internal flexibility of intellect, and to receive minds into our care as mere passive machines, the whole government of which is entrusted to us without any reserve?

Note III.

No grammarian can teach a language properly even in its simplest rudiments, without acting and reasoning upon principles involving the most abstruse propositions of metaphysics, and systems of logic. He cannot throw his communication into a right form and order without he is allowed undisputed possession of certain laws and dogmas, of which the boy is perfectly unconscious, but which he unhesitatingly allows and complies with.

He cannot assert the sense of a single word, or the obligation of a single rule of syntax—assert it, that is, from his own independent conviction and enquiry, without having pursued his researches through the whole of the language—followed up remote analogies —traced up the practice of men to the laws of the human mind—and analysed those laws into their most abstract and metaphysical form. He may indeed teach a language by rote, repeating nothing but the dicta of previous critics. But this is a still more striking instance of our dependence on authority—of the necessity of receiving truths upon the faith of other truths, such as the accuracy of judgment, careful researches, and faithful reports of those whom we copy, without at the same time possessing the slightest knowledge of the principles on which those persons argued, or the doctrines to which we virtually and unequivocally subscribe, because we act upon them without doubt, and take them in our hands necessarily though not obviously wrapped up in the most simple rules which we receive. Let me ask the astronomer to remove that which is analogous to subscription from his matriculation books, when a student proposes to learn the Newtonian system. Let him permit the boy

to doubt, or require to be informed of the whole extent and accuracy of Newton's calculations, the grounds on which he proceeded, with the authority for their correctness, and the accuracy not only of his own figures, but of the copies which are now seen in print. Could he proceed one step in instruction? Let a medical student refuse to perform an operation till he is acquainted with all the cases on which he is called on to ground his future practice. Let a child hesitate to touch a musical instrument until we have explained the theory of vibrations, and the ultimate principles of musical taste, on which his touching it depends. Or let an infant, about to put its hand into the fire, demand of us to reason with it on the principles which the objectors to blind unhesitating submission, to unknown doctrines in religion, would apply to those who are for the most part to all intents and purposes infants in religion. "My dear child, you wish to put your hand into that fire. Now you are a reasoning being, master of your own actions, and are bound as a free agent not to take any thing for granted which you do not understand. I will therefore, before I call upon you to take any decided step in either way, explain to you that the fire is composed of a body called light and phlogiston—of which light and phlogiston we know little, or nothing at all. Some persons indeed doubt their existence; but I will read to you some volumes on the subject, and you must decide for yourself. There is also a substance called carbon—you see it in that black coal. It is the same substance as this bright diamond which I wear in my ring. Now this substance is evolved, and a decomposition takes place, and the coals in the grate change into a gaseous matter, which you cannot see, and no one ever did see. But if you put your hand into that very pretty bright soft looking flame, it will produce, no one knows how, an irritation, of which no one

understands the nature in your nervous system, which no one can tell you any thing about except that we do not know where it begins, or where it ends, or what it is composed of, or how any affection of it should give you either pain or pleasure. And indeed to tell you the truth (for I love to be candid and open with you, and I dread inducing you to practice any deceit upon yourself by subscribing to doctrines of which you are not thoroughly master, or which contain anything, with which you are not acquainted—) there have been many disputes as to this same pain and pleasure—And some persons think pleasure a pain, and pain a pleasure. And others seem to doubt if there is any thing of the kind. And others are not quite satisfied of their own existence, and consequently, if they are right, we ought not to be thoroughly sure of the existence of any thing else—but on this hand I will read to you the arguments of Descartes, and you will judge for yourself. But as I see you are on the point of going to the grate, I can only say I have a strong opinion—(far be it from a fallible human being amidst such differences of opinion and in so much obscurity, to express himself dogmatically) but I have a strong opinion that if you touch the fire you will be burnt. You must not allow me to shackle your judgment—much less to place you by my influence in any situation of which afterwards you may doubt the propriety. Act for yourself—But above all do not commit yourself to one course of conduct or another till you know and have studied and are thoroughly convinced of the whole bearing of the subject."

Now I do ask if this is not precisely the principle, on which those would have us act, who object to an acknowledgement from a boy of any thing which he does not understand, and of Articles which he has not studied, and would leave him perfectly free, unbiassed, and uncontrolled, till by his own spontaneous efforts he

had examined and agreed to approve of them. I ask if Nature permits such a madness in any common interest of life. If she dreamed of it when with such anxious pains, as she brought us into the world blind, helpless, naked infants, and proposed to rear us slowly into angels, through a long and painful twilight of imperfection and temptation—so she provided us from our birth with such an internal store of prejudices, instincts of submission, necessities for dependence, habits of rapid generalization, trustfulness and credulity, even indolence and timidity and weakness; that we may not rise up in our cradles and pretend to walk about like men among the precipices and pitfalls which surround us.

That these abstruse doctrines are placed before the boy in open books which he may read or not, instead of being sealed up and suppressed in the teacher's mind, constitutes no real difference. Is it not necessary that they should be thus open, when these are the very points on which we expect hesitation? And is it not more honest and more fair, both to the student and to ourselves, to place them before the eyes of the whole world, to be openly examined and discussed?

Exeter College.
June, 22.

OXFORD: PRINTED BY TALBOYS AND BROWNE.

A

RELIGIOUS REASON,

AGAINST SUBSTITUTING A

DECLARATION OF CONFORMITY TO THE CHURCH,

FOR THE

SUBSCRIPTION TO THE ARTICLES

REQUIRED AT

MATRICULATION IN THE UNIVERSITY.

SUGGESTED TO HIS BROTHER MEMBERS OF CONVOCATION,

BY

A NON-RESIDENT LAYMAN.

OXFORD,
PRINTED BY W. BAXTER.
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1835.

Price One Shilling.

A

RELIGIOUS REASON,

&c.

THE events of the last year have been attended, I would fain hope, with at least one favourable result. They must have in some measure reminded non-resident Members of the University of their still existing connection with the seat of their former studies, and thus renewed impressions, which absence and avocations in less classic scenes had been, it may be, long exerting, unchecked, their influence insensibly to weaken. We have been called on to act in the character, comparatively new to many of us, of Members of Convocation; and our names, in the well-known Declaration, have been ranged anew by the side of those of the companions of our academic life, from whom we have long since been parted, and with whom our only tie of present connexion consists in our common reminiscences of Oxford.

At a time, then, in which the alteration of our University regulations has become a question of general interest; in which our Statute-book is perused, with a view to its revision, by those who

were till now ignorant of its very existence; occupying the attention of the Statesman as well as of the Ecclesiastic, of the Dissenter as well as of the Churchman; it cannot excite surprise that a Graduate, who, though long non-resident, still remembers and still prizes his connexion with Oxford, should either entertain strong feelings on the subject, or adopt this mode of expressing them.

It is not intended, in these pages, to fight anew a battle, which has been already well and successfully fought. The attempt, made last year by the avowed adversaries of our regulations, to induce the Legislature forcibly to interfere with our corporate rights and statutes, and to forbid us any longer to teach Christianity as an essential part of our system of education, has signally failed. Even the principal literary advocate of their cause (the Edinburgh Review) has seen the necessity of acknowledging, that all the arguments brought forward last year in favour of that cause were weak and untenable; and that if the attack upon our institutions be renewed, it must be based upon fresh grounds, and supported by reasoning of a nature totally different from that by which it was attempted, in the last Session, to commend it to the approval of Parliament.

The storm which has past over our heads has therefore been succeeded, for the present, by a calm; and, if we at a distance may rely upon the rumours which reach us, the authorities of Oxford, adopting

the wise and prudent course which beseems men in such comparatively tranquil seasons, are considering whether, while we deprecate forcible interference from without, something satisfactory to our supporters and conciliatory to our antagonists might not be accomplished by prudent legislation within our walls.

I say, "the wise and prudent course;" for there can be no doubt that, if there be any regulation of our Statute-book which, while it gives offence to any considerable number of our countrymen, is in itself a thing altogether indifferent, we are—I will not say justified in expunging it, but—bound forthwith to expunge it; bound by the moral law which forbids us to place unnecessary stumbling-blocks in the way of our fellow-men.

At the same time it must be borne in mind, that the case, as I have thus put it, rarely occurs. A demanded concession is seldom made the subject of a popular wish, the object of a popular cry, without its being felt, that the concession, if made, would be a real one; that it would either confer some direct advantage on those with whom the cry originates, or else involve the establishment of some *principle*, from the natural working out of which such advantage to them would necessarily flow. And the most dangerous of all concessions, as will readily be admitted, are those in which the assertion of a great principle is virtually contained, while they appear, to those who make them, nugatory. In all changes, in the adoption of any mea-

sure whatsoever, the habitual error of mankind is to be unaware of the large scale on which they are acting; to forget how much *principle* is involved in all which they do; and how small a portion of the results really attributable to any step will be those individual effects, upon which they can definitely reckon as its immediate consequences. And even, therefore, when some such consequences are foreseen, further and variously ramified ones, which we cannot foresee, must be reckoned upon as destined materially to modify in practice the results of any projected operation. But when nothing is foreseen—when we think that we are taking a step which involves neither assertion nor abandonment of principle—which appears to us, in short, nugatory—we are, if mistaken in this, literally doing we know not what, and committing ourselves to a course, while ignorant, I will not say, of its extent merely, but even of its probable tendency and direction.

These remarks, suggested by the bare report of a desire, on the part of some of our members, to conciliate enemies without injuring themselves, become still more apposite, when applied to the actual project which has been the result of it. A concession is advocated, the principal advantage of which, in the eyes of friends to our Church and system, must be, that it will in no material way interfere either with the authority of the one or with the character of the other. The question has, we are given to

understand, been mooted, of abolishing the Statute which requires from all persons who present themselves for Matriculation among us a Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, put forth by our Church in 1562, and of substituting for this Subscription some Declaration, which might, it is conceived, be made equivalent to it in force, at least so far as to ascertain the adherence of the party making it to the Church of England.

The requisition of this Subscription is, it may at once be admitted, precisely the weak point of our position in the eyes not only of our adversaries, but even of a large number of those who deem themselves, and who wish to be, our true friends and supporters.

For though we, who are accustomed to the subject, know, that the explanation of it, as given, if the reports be correct, in the House of Lords by the Bishop of Exeter, and approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury and by the Bishop of Durham, is the right one, and may be satisfactorily defended upon principle; yet those to whom the subject is new cannot, perhaps, be expected to view it in that light; and the point must therefore be considered as one which gives frequent, or I may say general, offence.

If, therefore, the point be in itself a thing indifferent, let us at once abandon it. But this I cannot think it; to me, for one, it appears, that the proposed substitution would involve the *abandonment*

of a principle, which our duty, not only to the Church but even to Christianity itself, imperatively requires us to maintain. And as I have not seen this important position urged as simply and clearly as was desirable, in the discussions which have hitherto taken place on the subject, I have thought it a duty in the following pages to suggest it for consideration.

In arguing against the expediency of a Declaration, I am not about to enquire into the point whether, if that expediency were admitted, it would be practicable to frame a Declaration possessing the required advantages, or not; or to examine into, or dwell upon, the technical difficulties which might probably present themselves in the way to its adoption. Let us, for argument's sake, assume, that a form, unexceptionable in itself, might be selected, according to which the Candidate for Matriculation should, without the possibility of evasion or misconception, declare his general adherence to the Church of England; but without pledging himself to a belief in the Articles set forth by her authority, at a time when, as far as we know, he has had neither the means nor the opportunity of examining them.

Nor shall I dwell upon the impropriety and forwardness, if I may so call it, which would, as it appears to me, essentially attach to any such Declaration as has been suggested, in which the party should be made to assert, that "he is bonâ fide a member of the Church of England." For

though it is open to any individual to declare his adherence to the officially announced creed of a Church, the Declaration of his Church-membership can be decorously made by that Church alone. He cannot sign, so to say, his own testimonials. It is with the Church that the power is lodged of admitting or rejecting candidates for the privileges of communion with her, nor could it, we may confidently assert, have been ever designed by the great Head of the Church that these privileges should be assumed, by such individuals as might choose them, at their own mere will and pleasure.

But admitting, for argument's sake, that the adoption of a Declaration in lieu of Subscription might be alike practicable and decorous, I proceed to give my reasons for thinking that we cannot make such a change at the present moment without the virtual denial of a most important point in the essential principles of Christianity, a point upon which the whole system of Church authority and ecclesiastical discipline mainly depends.

As a Layman, I feel that I need to apologize for addressing, on such a subject, many who are unquestionably so much more conversant with it than I can possibly be; and the more so, when about to discuss it on grounds and in a tone strictly religious. But the feeling which I have been led to entertain of its importance has rendered me anxious that it should obtain, in the event of a renewal of those discussions, full and independent consideration. And

a strictly religious tone is, after all, that in which the question of alterations in a religious constitution, as our academic one undoubtedly is, can with peculiar, if not exclusive, propriety be discussed.

From the time that Christianity was first revealed to mankind, two different, and in some respects opposite, classes of persons were to be found among those who professedly admitted its divine authority. One consisted of those who, when once convinced of the reality of that "kingdom of heaven" which our blessed Lord came to establish on earth, felt it their duty to receive that kingdom, according to his own word, "as little children;" who were habitually ready to reverence those in whom they recognized his ministers, habitually willing to believe that their directions were reasonable and their teaching true. The other class, in the meanwhile, was composed of those who also received, in a manner, the heavenly kingdom, but who could not be said to *submit* to it. Though their judgment had been convinced by the evidences for its general authority, they yet felt themselves at liberty to exercise that judgment independently, and without reference to this general conviction, upon the separate propriety of each of its individual commands. They never felt an obligation, arising from their admission of its divine original, to take, previously to examination, any one of its doctrines or precepts upon trust; and they listened to the teaching of its apostles in the

attitude of critics and judges, rather than in the posture of ready credence in which a docile child receives the authoritative instructions of a parent.

These two classes were from the very first easily distinguished from each other. The former, in the churches which St. Paul had founded, became "followers of him even as he also was of Christ." They "remembered him in all things, and kept the ordinances as he had delivered them." Even in things so apparently indifferent as the covering or uncovering of the head in their religious assemblies, they reverenced, and acted upon, his apostolic authority. They "were obedient to him in all things." They "submitted themselves to those whom he appointed to be ministers over them, and to every one that helped with him, and laboured." They recognized in him "the minister of Christ, and steward of the mysteries of God;" and they did not consequently require, previously to obeying him, distinct proof of the reasonableness of his every command, of the truth of his every assertion. It was enough for them that "so he ordained in all churches;" that "no such custom existed in the churches of God;" and in an honest, though not a blind, confidence, they forthwith adopted his views, or complied with his injunctions.

I say, "not a blind confidence," for he himself had clearly set forth the limits of his own authority. "If we," said he, "or an angel from heaven

preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed:" (Gal. i. 9.) thus directly declaring, that even his apostolic decrees were, ultimately, to be weighed by the doctrine which his converts had already received, and if found wanting when tried by that test, to be considered invalid. But we may not suppose that the members of his churches contemplated, any more than himself, the actual occurrence of such a contingency; still less that they waited to examine whether it had occurred or not, as each occasion arose of their receiving a command from him.

But those of the other class, even while receiving, at least in its great outlines, the apostolic doctrine, held themselves, as a rule, independent of apostolic control. They formed, at pleasure, sects of their own, or fomented division in the Churches of the Apostle. They slighted the authority which the Lord had given him for their edification, (2 Cor. x. 8.) and affirmed that his bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible; (2 Cor. x. 10.) thus alleging the personal infirmities of the minister as an excuse for forgetting the deference due to his ministry. And however they might, when convinced by argument or other proof, have admitted the truth of his assertions or the force of his injunctions, it is evident that they required such proof in every instance, and lent, prior to examina-

tion, no ready faith to aught that fell from his lips, upon the general ground of a recognition of his divine commission.

The spirit which actuated the former of these classes I will, for the sake of distinction, call the Catholic Spirit, as being that on which the Catholic Church of the Redeemer was orginally based, and by the instrumentality of which the same institution has been sustained, through the vicissitudes of eighteen hundred years, to the present day.

And its opposite I may, with equal propriety, designate as the Heretical Spirit; identical as it is with that selfwill and slowness to believe, in which all heresies, however they might differ in detail, have concurred as in a fundamental principle.

The Catholic Spirit, then, may be described as inducing a habit (the truth of Christianity and the authority of its ministers being once ascertained) of considering the doctrines which they teach, and the duties which they enjoin, to be scriptural and binding, until they are proved to be the reverse; while the Heretical teaches men (under the same general admission) to consider these doctrines and injunctions as unfounded and unauthoritative, till they shall have been ascertained one by one to be otherwise.

And these two Spirits have both prevailed, and unremittingly opposed each other, from the days of St. Paul to these in which our own lot is cast. Though that saint and his brother Apostles were

soon withdrawn from the superintendence of the Church, that Church itself still abode upon earth; and Ministers, at first chosen by the Apostles themselves, and then by others named by these first, in pursuance of apostolic directions, were continued in authority over the faithful members of Christ; and their unvaried right to general reverence and obedience has afforded in all ages an easy test for distinguishing between the Catholic Spirit and the Heretical. These Ministers could not, it is true, pretend to apostolic infallibility; and extreme cases might of course arise, which would justify separation in the members of the Church, as cases similarly extreme would justify violation of allegiance in subjects of the State. But these were the exceptions; as the *rule*, the Church's apostolically ordained Ministers might say, in the words of an Apostle himself, "He that knoweth God *heareth us;* he that is not of God *heareth not us*. HEREBY know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error." (1 John iv. 6.)

And as a branch of the Apostolic Church has been providentially established in our island, the same test, by which the spirits of our fathers were tried, is daily presented, in a variety of modes, to ourselves.

The Church commands, for instance, the observance of a particular holiday. Now the catholic in spirit will, if consistent, even though he have not examined into the grounds of the injunction, obey

it; from the presumption, on which he will feel himself bound to act, that the Church's ordinance is not inconsistent with reason or scripture. The heretical in spirit will pause; will say, perhaps, that he has not convinced himself from Scripture of the fitness of the observance, and therefore (and this is the overt act of his secret unsoundness) will *withhold*, until so convinced, his obedience.

But a still more decisive criterion between these two Spirits is to be found in the conduct of men with regard to the expressions of doctrine, to the Creeds, Articles, &c., which the Church has been compelled, by the ever-varying manifestations of heresy around her, from time to time to put forth. And though the expulsion of error from her pale was the primary view of her rulers in making these confessions, yet the compositions thus originating have indirectly performed, it may be, as important a part, in systematically elucidating, maintaining, and exercising within that pale the Catholic Spirit of child-like faith.

From the very first century the Church has thus claimed, from all her members, the reception—upon her own authority in the first instance—of that which we call the Apostles' Creed. From the fourth century she has required similar reverence for the Nicene; for many centuries, in the West at least, she has made a like claim for the Athanasian; and for nearly three, (as far as our own island is concerned,) she has upon the same general grounds demanded

our acquiescence in the Thirty-nine Articles*. And fully as, in England, she recognises the truth that, if we have time and means for enquiring into the subject, we are only to be confirmed in our belief by finding a strict accordance between her doctrines and the statements of Scripture; she by no means authorizes us to withhold our belief in these things *until* we may have instituted such an investigation. On the contrary, assuming as her right that she has "authority in controversies of faith," (Art. xx.) she directs that even our children shall be taught to repeat, and to declare their belief in, the Apostles' Creed; which, indeed, (not to mention the Nicene on holydays,) every member of her communion is made solemnly to assent to every time he attends divine service within her walls. And the truth even of the Athanasian is thus asserted, on the greater festivals of her Liturgy, by every one who would not feel himself left behind and out of place, while he participates in her solemnities. It would be tedious to trace the assumption of the same right, on her part, through the various services of her Liturgy. But I cannot forbear observing, that, even in infant baptism, where this confidence antecedent to proof is impossible, it is by a sort of sacred fiction (if I may use the word) *supposed* in the recipient of the sacrament, who is pledged to it by proxy.

* The question is not here debated of the comparative pretensions and authority of the Creeds of the primitive Church and our Articles. The point insisted on is the identity of their *use*.

And how completely, in all this, is the Catholic Spirit not only set before, but even enforced upon, the true members of the Church, amid the temptations of that Spirit of Heresy which pervades the world around them! How practically are they thus taught, that the first lessons of religion, inculcated by her, their appointed instructress in it, should be received by them as those of a parent are received by her simple-minded and undoubting children; who may, indeed, when their intellects shall have been matured, or their means of acquiring knowledge extended, calmly enquire into the reason of that which they have learnt; but whose behaviour would shock us as monstrously unnatural, did they not receive what was taught them, in the first instance, with humble deference and affectionate belief!

But though the Church, by her forms and constitution, still witnesses in this manner to the great truth, that the kingdom of heaven is to be received in the temper of a little child, the spirit of the times has, from various causes, become deeply imbued with a temper of an opposite description. And principal among these causes are the mistaken views which have been taken of our Reformation in the sixteenth century, and which have been mistaken for its genuine character. Blessed as was that Reformation in our own land, in which the Church maintained her position, and only renovated her purity, the change, which at the same time took place in several

countries of the continent, was one of a very different nature. Our Reformers only became Protestant that they might continue Catholic; and that they might preserve in the Church that Spirit, which in her first and purest ages had adorned her. But there were some among the Reformers, who flourished about the same period on the continent, who were led to trample under their feet the Catholic Church, and by consequence the Catholic Spirit, exalting in its place the Heretical; a step, the melancholy consequences of which are but too fearfully developing themselves in the present religious condition of some portions of protestant Europe. And it has almost necessarily followed, from our early political connexions with those whom we considered as our brother-reformers, and from the habit, thence generated in us, of identifying their cause with ours, that the faults of their religious character have been, in some degree, communicated to our own. And thus has been produced among us that spurious and unscriptural Protestantism, which requires proof as the necessary antecedent condition of every act of belief whatever; which scorns to be guided in matters of religion, where certainty is not to be obtained, by hints, partial indications, or probabilities; and which, vesting every man with an imaginary independence of his own, teaches him to be, as it were, his own Church; to trust, exclusively, to his own individual judgment; and to regard himself, in spiritual mat-

ters, as an isolated being, with whose religion no one else has any concern, and who has himself no concern with the religion of others.

And now to apply the above remarks to the question immediately before us. If they be well-founded, our demand of Subscription to the Articles, far from being any singular or peculiarly searching test, is merely the declaration, on our part, of a *principle* necessarily interwoven with the whole system of the Church, and in accordance with her spirit. It is a demand made upon Churchmen, in which nothing is required of them but that which their very church-membership itself implies. If it be asked, whether, this point being admitted, it be *expedient*, under existing circumstances, to make this demand at Matriculation; I reply, that such is not now the question for our decision. It is not, *now*, open to us to discuss the subject, as though the point before us were whether we would avail ourselves of the opportunity of Matriculation to illustrate the nature of Church authority, or not. In the enforcement of the practice of Subscription, our assertion on the subject has been long and habitually made; and our only present alternative is to maintain that assertion by persevering in our practice, or to *withdraw that assertion* by abandoning it. And the withdrawal of an assertion, by way of concession, or in consequence of clamour, is practically tantamount to a denial of its truth. Here, indeed, the writer of this, as living in the

world, is in a position to speak more confidently than if he resided in the University; to affirm, that, to the best of his belief, the practical *effect* of such a change would be to produce a general impression that we gave up a principle which we ceased to assert.

What an admission, then, is this which the proposed proceeding would, as it seems, necessarily involve! The enemies to our faith might well exult, to find the Christian Church, as represented in the University, suddenly abandoning, by an official act, the position which she had for eighteen centuries maintained, and assuming a new and opposite one, in compliance with the popular opinions of the day. They might well triumph to find her asserting, that the "kingdom of heaven"—that kingdom which her great Head came among us to establish below—was to be received by those called to be its subjects in the posture of judges, and in the temper of critics, disputants, and doubters; in the posture, in short, least of all resembling that of affectionate faith; in the temper most diametrically opposed to that of "little children."

No sound member of the Church, it is clear, who sees a principle like this involved in the change suggested, can be brought to sanction that change from a wish to please, to satisfy, or to conciliate, any portion, even the most influential and respectable, of his contemporaries. If, indeed, what has been above said be true, of the discrepancy between

the Catholic Spirit and the Spirit of our age, it would be rather strange than otherwise, did our present practice at once approve itself satisfactory to all friends of the Church, however well-intentioned, before whose notice it was suddenly brought. From them we have, I am persuaded, nothing to ask but either a candid and patient investigation of the subject, or at least a forbearance to pronounce a decided opinion or to take a decided part in the matter. If such persons, on considering the above remarks, should be of opinion, that the Spirit, which I have termed "the Catholic," be indeed the true spirit of the Christian Church, they will see that our practice, in requiring the Subscription, only startles them, because their minds, insensibly biassed by the tone of an age which glories in the Spirit above termed "Heretical," have lost sight of one peculiar feature in the system and character of Christianity. They will see why it is that, even for the sake of conciliating those whose support we need, and whose approval we prize, we shrink from making what might at first have appeared to them an unimportant alteration. And they will admit with us, that any measure, by which the Church should be understood to withdraw from her right of demanding, from those who are brought to her for education, a reception, in the first instance, of the Articles of her faith upon her own authority, would imply a renunciation by her of that Catholic Spirit, which has, from the day of her Lord's

departure, never ceased to animate her; and an adoption, in its place, of that Heretical Principle of action, which, prevalent as it is in a world to whose maxims it is accommodated, is repugnant to every true notion of Christian duty, and condemned by the whole tenor of Christian Revelation.

THE END.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

SUBSCRIPTION

TO

THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES.

QUESTIONS

Respectfully addressed to

MEMBERS OF CONVOCATION

ON

THE DECLARATION

PROPOSED AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE SUBSCRIPTION TO THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES,

BY A BACHELOR OF DIVINITY,

WITH ANSWERS

BY A RESIDENT MEMBER OF CONVOCATION,

AND

BRIEF NOTES UPON THOSE ANSWERS

BY THE

BACHELOR OF DIVINITY.

OXFORD,

PRINTED BY W. BAXTER:

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1835.

SINCE the following Notes were written, I have seen some other Answers, under rather a misleading Title, "*Second Edition* of Questions," &c. (there having been no First Edition, for the Questions had not been published,) but saw nothing in them, in addition, requiring notice.

B. D.

Question.

1. Is the proposed substitution of a 'Declaration' for 'Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles,' intended to relax our present system or no? If not, what adequate good do its authors propose, to set against the evil of unsettling men's minds? if it is, are these the times for weakening the authority of the Church, or requiring less definite and distinct views of Scripture truth?

Answer.

We have rather to enquire into the merits of the proposal, than the intentions of its authors[1]. We have to choose between two forms of Statute. The one obliges the candidates for Matriculation, if above twelve years of age, to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles; but neither explains the sense of the Subscription, nor directs that it shall be explained at all. By the other they are all required to subscribe to an express Declaration, (read at the time to them or by them,) that they assent to every doctrine of the Church which they at present know[2], and are ready and willing to be instructed in them all, conforming meanwhile to her Worship, and submitting to her Discipline. The other portion of the Matriculation Test (the Oath of Supremacy) is enjoined by both Statutes alike. Every thing else remains as

Notes.

[1] I inquired mainly what is the purport of the Statute: and surely we ought to consider whether it is a relaxation or no, and whether, beyond the merits or demerits of this proposed change in itself, it be peculiarly fitted or *unfitted* for these times.

[2] All "which they at present know;" but it does not hint that they should know any of them.

before. And to the subsequent instruction in the Thirty-nine Articles required by the Statutes of the University the Declaration distinctly refers [a].

Whether the alteration will or will not relax our present system, or weaken the authority of the Church, or require less definite and distinct views of Scripture truth, or whether the existing or the proposed Statute is to be preferred, let us consider as we proceed.

Question.

2. If no relaxation had been intended, would not the principle of substituting a 'Declaration' for Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles have been applied to the several Degrees conferred by the University as well as to the Matriculation?

Answer.

There was not the same reason for altering the Subscription at the several Degrees, because all who arrive at the Degrees must have been instructed in the Thirty-nine Articles, and are of age to understand them.

Note.

[1] This concedes what was implied by the Question. The proposed change is commonly defended on the ground that it is a change of form *only*, that the new form is a more intelligible way of doing the same thing. It is here conceded that the Declaration does mean less than the Subscription.

[a] Quotquot autem in Matriculam Universitatis redigendi accedunt, coram Cancellario ejusve Commissario Declarationi sequenti prius ab ipsis perlectæ, vel alio perlegente auditæ, subscribant:

I *A. B.* declare that I do, so far as my knowledge extends, assent to the Doctrines of the United Church of England and Ireland as set forth in her Thirty-nine Articles; that I will conform to her Liturgy and Discipline; and that I am ready and willing to be instructed in her Articles of Religion, as required by the Statutes of this University.

Question.

3. Is it not notorious that the same proposal, when originally made last Term, was looked upon at once by all persons out of the University (of whatever bias) as a relaxation of our practice? and will not this persuasion produce that laxity?

Answer.

Supposing that all persons out of the University regarded the proposal of the last Term as a relaxation of our practice, this persuasion does not make it so[1]; still less need[2] such persuasion produce "laxity," which is something more than "relaxation."

Notes.

[1] But it affords a strong presumption that it is so.

[2] But it probably will: for if persons are persuaded that the new form is meant to be a relaxation of the old, those, who have to subscribe it will subscribe it in a lax sense. Besides, it has already been conceded in Answer 2, that it *is* a relaxation: to what purpose then to argue, that "people's persuasion that it is a relaxation does not make it so?"

Question.

4. Is it not a coincidence worthy of remark, that those persons, whose principles lead them to desire greater laxity, are unanimously in favour of substituting a Declaration for Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles; and ought not this to be a warning to us who wish to see religious instruction given definitely and fully according to the doctrines of our Church?

Answer.

Are we never to adopt a change which we approve, if it is approved by others also whose principles are unsound[1]? However faulty their own principles, they may rightly censure a fault in our practice. The proposed change, moreover, leaves, nay

requires, religious instruction to be given as before, definitely and fully, according to the doctrines of our Church.

Note.

[1] Possibly there may be cases, in which one might on sound principles desire the same change which others do on unsound; or (which is still more rare) one *might* agree with persons of unsound views, in opposition to most of those who in the main have sound views: one cannot say in the abstract, that this should *never* be the case: but such cases, as every one will know from his own experience, are rare, and he will probably think ought to have been rarer: the circumstance was not urged, as in itself conclusive, but as a *warning* only; which might at least awaken misgiving.

Question.

5. Does not the proposed substitution, under colour of being "*equivalent* as a Test to the present act of Subscription, *i. e. neither more nor less exclusive*[b]," really introduce a radical change by the words "so far as my knowledge extends?"

Answer.

No doubt the words "so far as my knowledge extends" introduce a real change; a change expressly designed to meet the obvious objection to the present practice, under which we require Subscription to many points which the generality of subscribers neither know nor have studied, nor perhaps ought as yet to have studied; Subscription, in a word, beforehand to what the students are afterwards to learn[1]. Nevertheless, the Test proposed may be, *as a Test*, exactly equivalent to the present, i. e. neither more nor less exclusive[2]. Try the Declaration as a Test, taking all its clauses not only apart but in combination, and inquiring who might be admitted under it, and who are or may be admitted now from England, Scotland, or from foreign Churches.

[b] Letter to Lord Radnor, p. 22.

Notes.

[1] Students have afterwards to learn, *for themselves*, by their own continued study of Holy Scripture, as to portions of the Articles, that they are agreeable to Scripture, but they have not then (or ought not to have) to learn the statements of those Articles themselves. Of great portions of the Articles, any well-instructed young man will know the truth: others he will receive on authority, until he be further instructed. If he do not, he probably will never receive the whole truth, and is not in a frame of mind to obtain it. (See Note on Answer 19.)

[2] Granting that it were equivalent 'as a Test,' yet this is not all, nor even what we have principally to consider. The admission of persons, of false or no religious persuasions, would only affect us, as they would introduce laxity or error among those committed to our charge. The great evil of the day, and the great cause of division among us, is not Heresy, but Indifferentism; and this would be encouraged by the vagueness of the proposed Declaration as to Doctrines. The abolition of Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, proposed last year, would, as always appeared to me, have affected us still more, by directly altering the character of our own Church, than by the admission of persons of any or no Creed into the University. Bt the Declaration is not equivalent even as a Test: because, from the laxity which it bears upon its face, it would be signed laxly, whereas the Articles would not.

Question.

6. Since the alleged ground for this change is the supposed religious ignorance of young men, or their imagined incapacity to understand the Articles, do not these words "so far as my *knowledge*

extends," on the very supposition of its authors, nullify the whole Declaration?

Answer.

The phrase in question whilst it meets the supposed religious ignorance or incapacity of young men, by no means nullifies the Declaration *as a Test*[1], because *one* point of disagreement *known* prevents *assent*. And who are they whom we desire or ought to exclude, but those who knowingly dissent from the doctrines of the Church, will not conform to her Liturgy or Discipline, are not willing to receive religious instruction at our hands[2]?

Notes.

[1] But it makes it a *mere* Test, instead of being also a guide; and to those of our own Church it destroys the whole value of the act.

[2] —Those who are professedly indifferent about her, despise her authority, consider men's views as to the Sacraments matters of indifference, or regard all forms of belief alike, (the prevailing notions of the larger body of Dissenters in this day,) in a word, the Indifferentists. Every body knows that it is not by the signature of the Thirty-nine Articles that most Dissenters are deterred from entering the University, but because the conformity would imply the abandonment of dissent. In whatever degree conformity is represented as a mere outward conformity, (see Answer 12.) the door is opened to indifferentists, who wish for civil instruction only, and our Universities will be degraded into mere "literary institutions," (Dr. Hampden, p. 39.)—a moral pest to the country.

Question.

7. May not a profession of "assent, so far as my knowledge extends," be made by any person who is carelessly or wilfully ignorant of every

statement in the Articles? Will it not encourage that wilfulness and carelessness, and become a standing jest among all the less thoughtful of the young men who are to make it?

Answer.

No test is supposed to be of use except on the presumption of honesty on the part of the subscriber. As *preventives*[1] of careless and wilful ignorance, or the jests of the thoughtless, the existing and the proposed tests, perhaps, are pretty much alike. There is indeed something prescribed on the part of the University, in the new Statute, to draw the serious attention of the young men to the act of Subscription: whereas by the present Statute, according to one of its most active defenders, "the youthful Student does no more than enter his name upon the pages of a Register to which the Articles are prefixed."

Note.

[1] The question did not speak of *prevention*, but of the positive *encouragement* to wilfulness, and carelessness, and thoughtless jests, afforded by the new Statute: and will any one, who knows human nature, doubt that such expressions as these will be current, "I signed, 'as far as my knowledge extends,' but I need not know any thing about it," &c. &c. Man cannot prevent carelessness or indifference, but he need not invite it, nor provide a loop-hole for it.

Questions.

8. Is not such a Declaration analogous to the mode of signing the Articles, '*as far as* (quatenus) they are agreeable with holy Scripture,' adopted in Germany? and did the circumstance, that that formula was introduced by very pious and excellent men, who only wished to relieve tender consciences, prevent its being grievously abused, and becoming the skreen and the occasion of intolerable laxity?

9. Since the effect of that formula has been, that very many even right-minded men in Germany now think it presumptuous to declare that they assent to any Articles, '*because* (quia) they agree with holy Scripture,' why should not this formula have the like effect even upon right-minded young men here, and promote a sceptical frame of mind, which will doubt the possibility of ever 'coming to the knowledge of the truth?'

Answer.

There is this important difference[1] between the Subscription in Germany and the present proposal,—whoever subscribes to Articles of faith after due consideration ought to have ascertained beforehand that they *are* agreeable to Holy Scripture; if not, he should withhold his assent. The test should not be qualified to meet his doubts, but his doubts should be removed before he subscribes to the test. With the German formula and its consequences, accordingly, we have nothing to do. It is not analogous to the qúalifying clause in the Declaration, which is expressly adapted to the foreseen, and often unavoidable, defect of knowledge on the part of the Subscribers. Why should the clause promote a sceptical frame of mind in those for whose instruction we subsequently provide, and whose defect of knowledge we labour to remove?

Note.

[1] I spoke of analogy, not of identity: the German and English formula agree in the point for which I compared them, although they must of course differ in others: they agree in this; the English, as well as the German, introduces *a lax formula*, on the plea of "relieving tender consciences" (see below, Answer 18.): the advocates of the German formula, as well as the English, thought that it was a change in form only, that it only "met an obvious objection;" (viz. that it was improper to affirm on *oath*, as

was the practice in Germany, the truth of a body of Articles drawn up by men, however persons might be persuaded of their truth,) that it only "expressed what was implied in the existing formula," &c. &c. yet the German formula was abused, and the occasion of great abuse: why then should not the English? mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur.

Question.

10. Will not the promise to 'conform to the Liturgy and *Discipline* of the Church of England' be broken, whenever an individual wilfully fails to attend the daily College Service, or habitually turns away from the Lord's Supper? and is not the exaction of such a promise a snare to men's consciences, and contrary to the spirit of the Church of England, as well as calculated to 'bring a very solemn act into light esteem [c]?'

Answer.

What is in reality the test, and what the promise? The test (this *part* of the test) excludes the Nonconformist[1]. The promise engages the Student not to infringe the uniformity of our public worship, but to submit to the Government and Discipline of the Church, never pleading scruples of conscience in justification of omissions of duty. But what amount of wilful omissions of duty, occasional or habitual, shall be held to constitute Nonconformity, must ever be determined, as at present, by the authorities under whom he is placed.

Note.

[1] But it is a test of the worst kind, for while it excludes the Nonconformist, it is oppressive to the Conformist; it exacts more than the Church does, in a matter

[c] The objection made to the present signature of the Articles in the "Letter to Lord Radnor," p. 18.

provided for by the Church: and binds too fast, as the former part of the Declaration does too loose. The Declaration says nothing about "scruples of conscience" or the like: it requires an unconditional promise, which will be continually broken.

Question.

11. Have not such sorts of promises the tendency to present those things to the mind as *mere* duties, which are our highest and inestimable *privileges?*

Answer.

That is to say, the more safe the engagement the more dangerous it becomes in its tendency! And after all is not the same promise virtually implied in the present act of Subscription? Yet I admit the tendency. It is a tendency inseparable from every part of our system wheresoever we recognize the very ideas of duty or of discipline. We cannot exclude it[1], and must endeavour to counteract it.

Note.

[1] But there was no occasion to add to our difficulties. There is this difference also between the two cases: when a duty to God (as His public worship) is enforced by College authorities, they would naturally put *prominently* forward the duty to God, or the privilege annexed to the right discharge of that duty; the question of discipline would be altogether subordinate: the "Declaration" alludes to this class of duties *only* as a matter of University discipline, and a test of conformity.

Question.

12. Does not the distinction between '*assent* to the Doctrines of the Church' and '*conformity* to her Discipline,' imply that *outward* conformity alone is required, encourage the notion that Discipline is mere matter of opinion, and so tend to weaken

the authority of those Articles, which relate to Discipline, and which are already comparatively disparaged?

Answer.

What shall we say then to existing Statutes which recognize[1] the same distinction[e]? But the Statute which makes the distinction, provides the remedy for any abuse of it. Let our system be what it may, it will ever be the duty of the Tutor, to lead on his Pupil to more than outward conformity, teaching him at length to value the Discipline of the Church, and to esteem all her means of grace both as duties and as privileges.

Note.

[1] The existing Statutes do *not* recognize the distinction. They speak of instruction in the Articles, (which include both discipline and doctrine,) and require that our Scholars should be formed in both. To correspond with the Statute quoted, the Declaration should have been "assent to the doctrines *and discipline* of the Church, &c. and conform to her discipline, &c." or "assent to the Articles of the Church and conform to her discipline." One need scarcely observe, that "doctrinæ Articulis" does not mean, in our modern sense, "Articles relating to doctrine only."

Question.

13. Is not the very form of the Declaration, '*I* do assent,' '*I* will conform,' '*I* am ready and willing,' calculated to exalt persons' notions of self, making them look upon their assent and conformity as an act of compliance rather than a duty? as a thing which it is at their own discretion to do or not to do, rather than an act of obedience?

[e] Tit. III. §. 2. Tutor vero Scholares tutelæ et regimini suo commissos probis moribus imbuat, et in probatis authoribus instituat; et maxime in rudimentis religionis et doctrinæ Articulis in Synodo Londini anno 1562 editis: ac pro virili suo disciplinæ in Ecclesia Anglicana publice receptæ eos conformes præstabit.

Answer.

Must the whole of this question be answered seriously? Does not the present Subscription mean "*I* subscribe," "*I* assent," "*I* acquiesce," or whatever else may be the interpretation put upon the act[1]? And granting that assent or conformity are duties, and acts of obedience, can we or should we conceal from the individual that it is and ever must be at his own discretion[2] to obey or disobey?

Notes.

[1] Yes; and it is the *form*, not the substance, which was objected to: and that form seems to me just to constitute the difference between simply performing a plain duty prescribed, and assuming, or being taught to assume, the position of one, who is fully at liberty to assent to the doctrines of the Church or to reject them, to obey her discipline or to disobey it.

[2] Read "at his own peril to disobey."

Question.

14. Is not an *act* of obedience much better than *professions?*

Answer.

Certainly *acts* are better than *professions*, where the act performs what the profession only promises; but here there are acts alike under the present and the proposed Statutes, in the one case an act unexplained, in the other followed by explanation and professions. Which of the two is the better is the very question before the Convocation. But then the present is "an act of *obedience*"—obedience to whom? to the Parents of the Student, or to the University[1]? Alter the Statute, and the act of obedience to these will be as before. Is it obedience then to the Church? But here is one of the very objections justly entertained against the present practice; since the Church never has required Subscription to the Articles except under circumstances essentially different[f].

[f] See note at the end [and remarks on that note, *B. D.*]

Note.

[1] The new Declaration can no more be called an "act of obedience" than any other contract, treaty, or stipulation between equal parties. But the answer admits that the "obedience to the Church" involved in the present practice is one of the objections justly entertained against it, and so again concedes that we have here a "change of principle."

Question.

15. Have we not, again and again, had testimony even from those who lived at a time, when the Articles were less studied than they now are, that the signing them had a beneficial effect upon themselves? and does not one, who understands human nature well, (Lord Brougham,) object to that signature, on the ground of the influence which that act has on men in after-life?

Answer.

It may be, and I do not doubt it, that signing the Articles has benefited some; the question is, what is its effect upon the many; and what the balance of advantages between the present and the proposed systems; provided of course that there is nothing fundamentally wrong in either of them. Just so as to Lord Brougham's position, it may be true, or it may not; the influence of Subscription in after-life may be sometimes salutary, sometimes the reverse[1]; it is a point to be considered, not a proof that our present practice may not be improved.

Note.

[1] Is there any proof that it has been "the reverse?" proof has been alleged that it has been beneficial even under circumstances less favourable than the present; such proof might be multiplied indefinitely; and is not met by a mere "it may be." Until not mere imaginary cases of the possible injury of early Subscription, but actual proof

that it has been injurious, is produced, what is there to set against the direct testimony of those who have been benefitted, or against the presumption of its benefit resulting from the opinion of one adverse to it, but who has great knowledge of our nature?

Question.

16. Has not the knowledge of Christian truth been increasing among us in proportion as the minds of our youth have been directed to the Articles? and is it not wanton trifling with our privileges, to exchange for an untried course, that under which God has blessed us for 250 years, and, as we trust, is day by day more and more blessing us, in order to pacify, or to facilitate our controversy with, those who love neither our Articles nor our Instruction?

Answer.

Granted that the knowledge of Christian truth among us has increased with an increasing attention to the Articles, what is it that has really directed this growing attention to them? Not, surely, the Subscription at Matriculation, but the Examination at the first Degree. The Subscription Statute prescribed a Test, and nothing more; it neither enforced any study of the Articles before Matriculation, nor even kept up the memory of that Statute which enjoined subsequent instruction in them[1]. The Examination Statute (in which no alteration is proposed) pointedly recalled the attention of Instructors to that forgotten duty[s], and in good measure ensured its observance by obliging every Student not simply to subscribe the Articles, but to know them.

[s] Tit. IX. Sect. ii. §. 3. Adhibentor etiam Doctrinæ Articuli in Synodo Londini Anno 1562 editi; in quibus, juxta Academiæ Statuta, a Tutoribus instituendi sunt omnes qui illorum tutelæ committuntur. Vide Tit. III. §. 2.

Note.

[1] i. e. "Quid leges sine moribus vanæ proficiunt?" Statutes cannot enforce themselves: but by what were people, even in times of comparative slumber, (if they were such,) awakened to frame the Examination Statute? Was it not by this very signature of the Articles? And why has Cambridge lost this instruction in the Articles, but because she exchanged her Subscription for a Declaration? So that the Examination Statute (in whatever degree it is an advantage) is *one* derived from our Subscription. Besides, instruction and examination in the Thirty-nine Articles were enjoined by a Statute (1578) older than the Subscription Statute, which having proved inadequate, the Subscription Statute was added: but there was no occasion to incorporate in it a Statute, which had been passed but three years before.

Question.

17. If persons now occasionally come up to the University, who, on account of their ignorance of *all* Christian truth, are unfit to sign the Articles, is this evil to be remedied by requiring *less* of them, or by requiring *more* of their instructors? Has not the University already raised the character of religious instruction in the country, and may it not, by a steady adherence to its principles, raise it still further?

Answer.

Is it the drift of these Questions to recommend a preliminary examination[1]? For by that alone could we be said to *require* any thing at all of the instructors of youth before their Matriculation. But the evil supposed, is not the evil objected to. We do not urge against the present system that *some* are unfit to subscribe the Articles, because they are "ignorant of *all* Christian truth[2]," (let us hope that this is but "occasional,") but that

from the *greater part* it is unwise to require Subscription, because they cannot have studied *some* of the Articles. An evil this, if it be an evil, not to be remedied by Subscription nor by preliminary examination; it lies in the nature and development of the human faculties. Yet no one would disparage or impede the present or the future usefulness of the University. But why must we ascribe to the uniform practice of 250 years, her happy influence in raising the character of religious instruction during the last 35[3]? And why assume that the University may not at once improve her practice, yet steadily adhere to her principles?

Notes.

[1] Such an examination in each College would probably be very beneficial, if adopted for the purpose of ascertaining whether the students understand (not, whether *they* can prove) what they subscribe.

[2] But is it not the fact, that the cases ordinarily referred to, in proof of the unfitness of young men to sign the Articles, are those in which they have been ignorant of all, even fundamental, Christian truth, and culpably negligent as to its acquisition? On a late occasion, which came to the writer's knowledge, all the candidates for admission in a certain College, except one, however different in natural talents or general attainments, appeared, at the College examination, sufficiently acquainted with the Articles, to be fully entitled to sign them. The one exception arose from culpable negligence. The preparation of most of the rest had originated in the knowledge, that the Articles were to be signed at Matriculation. Lectures in the Articles, for the highest class, have, in consequence of the same regulation, been introduced into two, at least, of our great schools, and with a beneficial effect. Are we then, it is again asked, to lower our standard on account of men's occasional negligence, or to endeavour to raise them up to our standard?

[3] And have the last 35 been the only years out of the

250 during which the University has exerted that influence? or has she not rather all along been a blessing to the country just in proportion as she adhered to her principles?

Question.

18. Has not this agitation of the question among ourselves, the tendency to throw stumbling-blocks in the way of our younger Members, to create or exaggerate difficulties, and to lead them to sign with doubt and misgiving?

Answer.

If a difficulty once perceived can scarcely fail to excite doubt and misgiving, is this an argument against agitating the question, or in favour of removing the difficulty[1]? We are told, however, and upon no mean authority, that "to many a young man of tender conscience the present Subscription often furnishes occasion for painful doubts and misgivings[2], perhaps for serious self-reproach." (Letter to a New Member of the New Parliament.)

Notes.

[1] Certainly, if the difficulty exists in the regulation itself; but not if, as in the present case, it exists only in men's false statements of it. (See next note.) If senior members of the University raise doubts about the propriety of young men signing the Articles, (see Answers 5, 17,) they certainly are responsible for the doubts and misgivings occasioned by their authority.

[2] I have met with many who had misgivings about the Matriculation Oath,—with none, except one or two of a sceptical turn, who had doubts about the propriety of signing the Articles: and I suspect this writer has confounded the two. Persons indeed, who have signed the Articles carelessly or thoughtlessly, have ground for "serious self-reproach," for this, as well as for their other careless and thoughtless acts; but this was their sin, not the fault of the system.

Question.

19. Since Subscription to Articles of Faith must of necessity involve different degrees of assent, according to persons' different degrees of religious attainments, knowledge, and character, have not these discussions the tendency to produce perplexity as to all Subscription, even that of the Clergy?

Answer.

The third Article of the 36th Canon takes away all perplexity in every instance of Subscription to the Articles, except that under discussion. Itself subscribed together with the Articles, it prevents any one from subscribing them unless he "acknowledges all and every one of them to be agreeable to the word of God[1]." What if we were to remove perplexity, in the only instance which really does admit of it? requiring Subscription, as the Church requires it, from those alone who can refer the Articles to the authority of the Scriptures, not seeking to escape from a perplexity purely of our own creating by some unexplained, indefinite reference to the authority of the Church?

Note.

[1] But it does not decide, *on what ground* persons are to "acknowledge the Articles to be agreeable to the word of God," whether on their own knowledge exclusively, or in part upon authority. If then it is inculcated, (as it is by this change,) that persons are *not* to sign upon authority, must not great perplexity be necessarily caused to persons, who sign *in part* upon authority? and will not most men, who have examined themselves, avow that they did continue to sign in part on authority, even for some time after they had taken their B.A. degree? Nay, will persons of 21, or even 23, be fitted to sign the 17th Article (appealing as it does to men's own experience) on their own personal knowledge? Or again, will there not be many points in

many of the Articles, which persons must continue to receive on authority, even after they see the Articles generally to be agreeable to the word of God? Or again, will not persons recollect, that after they had been taught, in what passage or passages of Holy Scripture divers truths in the Articles were contained, they could not at first have decided upon their own judgment, whether they were so contained, and consequently still, for a time, received both the Article and the proof of it upon authority? I would ask persons, with all the solemn earnestness required by such subjects, to recall to their minds in what way they first received the proofs of many primary doctrines, (as even the Eternal Generation of the Blessed Son, or the Eternal Procession of the Holy Ghost, or again "the going down of Christ into hell," or that "all works before justification have the nature of sin," or that "the corruption of nature, in every person born into this world, deserveth God's wrath and damnation,")—whether they received them because they *themselves saw* that they were "agreeable to the word of God," or because the Church had always connected these truths with the passages laid before them? whether some time did not elapse after they had received these truths, as contained in the passages alleged, before they felt assured, on their own growing conviction, that they were so contained: —and so again, with regard to the blessed Sacraments? And will not then much perplexity be wrongly caused to these and many other persons, even when entering upon the ministry, if they are taught that they are not to sign authority? And are not all these doubts, whether persons may sign upon authority, at variance with the Article, which says, that "the Church has authority in Controversies of Faith?"

Question.

20. Has not this protecting clause, 'so far as my knowledge extends,' a direct tendency to foster

the evil maxim of the day, that ' one cannot believe that which one does not fully understand,' and so to make belief a mere matter of knowledge?

Answer.

Many interpreters, perhaps, explain the present Subscription under the self-same qualification. Be this, however, as it may, I would not extenuate the evil or the folly of the maxim alluded to. Never to believe what we do not fully understand, is to believe nothing of heavenly things, and so to reject the better half of Revelation. But how does the Declaration shelter any maxim of the kind, whilst the subscriber simply states his assent to such of the doctrines of the Church, as he at present knows [1], and his willingness to be instructed in them all? Construe the offending clause as we will, it conceals no other evil maxim than this, " that we should not require a formal declaration of assent to the truth of doctrines, of which the subscriber does not yet know [2] whether they are or are not agreeable to the word of God."

Note.

[1] The words are, " so far as my knowledge extends," which may mean something very different, and is so construed by a certain class of theologians at the present day.

[2] On his own research?

Question.

21. Has the University any guarantee, that if it consent to this alteration, other measures will not be founded upon it? or rather, is it not probable that, sooner or later, further alterations will be so engrafted, which the right-minded among the advocates of the present change will endeavour in vain to oppose?

Answer.

Guarantee against future measures the University can have none, save only the good sense[1] of the Convocation, or the forbearance of the National Legislature. But to clear our system from objections, is one of the best securities against further alterations.

Note.

[1] Facilis descensus Averni.

Question.

22. Did any alteration, which had for its object the relaxation of settled principles, ever fail of producing further relaxation? or did the authors of the first change ever foresee the extent of the evils which they caused?

Answer.

The questions assume that the proposed alteration has for its objects the relaxation of settled principles; an assumption which rests upon no proof, and, it appears to me, admits of none.

Note.

[1] It is conceded in Answers 2, 5,14,17, 19.

Question.

23. Would it, *e. g.* (to take only the first step in the career) be even an extension of the proposed principle, to dispense with Subscription at the Degree of B.A., in the case of the great majority of our Members, all such, namely, as should not intend to be teachers[d]; and would not this palpably

[d]This is m ade the ground of distinction between Undergraduate Subscription and that at the Degree of B.A. (or at least is the only one mentioned) in the "Letter to Lord Radnor," p. 17. and by "Dr. Hampden on the use of Religious Tests in the University," p. 36.

and seriously affect the religious instruction of the place?

Answer.

I leave Dr. Hampden and the writer of "the Letter to Lord Radnor" to defend[1] themselves. It will be time enough for us to discuss any inadequate arguments for the Tests at the Degrees, if it shall ever be proposed to abolish the Tests. But, at present, what is this "proposed principle," whose extension is anticipated? Retaining the principle of a Test, and changing only its form, we would no longer require Subscription to the Articles from those whom we cannot expect to have studied them[2]. No *extension* of this proposal applies at all to the case of other parties of a different age, and for whose instruction prior to their Subscription we have expressly and adequately provided.

Notes.

[1] But since it is the proposal of the author of "the Letter to Lord Radnor," slightly modified, which is now submitted to us, we are concerned with his opinions; and surely the writer of "the Letter" in answering these objections to his proposal, was concerned to "defend himself."

[2] Two or three objections to our present practice have been put forward by those who impugn it: setting aside for the time those who wish for *any* change, as a step to further change, this writer himself sets forth two grounds. 1. The youth of the parties subscribing. 2. That the Church does not call for subscription from her lay-members. (Ans. 14. Letter to Earl of Radnor, p. 25. cp. Rev. E. Denison, on the admission of Dissenters, p. 63. ed. 2.) He questions also the right of the University to demand it of any who are not teachers. Why then are we to assume that the present measure is founded on the first principle only, not upon the second, which would extend to most cases at the degree of B.A.? It may be asked incidentally also, what is to be done in the cases of those persons, who

take their B.A. degree (as is the case sometimes now) before the age of 18 or 19, since they also, on this hypothesis, must be unfit to sign the Articles.

Question.

24. Have not some of the Advocates of the present measure already avowed themselves favourable to further innovation? Has not one, who speaks as in a station of authority, proposed[h] to substitute a 'profession of belief in the Articles of faith contained in the Apostles' Creed and Church Catechism,' as a '*less rigorous test*,' or again, a mere 'Declaration of conformity to the Discipline and worship of the Church, and of willingness to be instructed in her Articles of Faith?'

Answer.

True; some conceive that our system of religious instruction would not be endangered, even if the Matriculation Test included no assent to doctrines; another would prefer a positive assent to certain statements of doctrine; to those, *e. g.* in which the Student might with propriety be examined before his admission[i]. Both opinions may deserve consideration; but is either of them likely even to obtain a hearing, unless the present proposal should be set aside[1]?

Note.

[1] i. e. If we relax to a certain degree, we shall not be called upon to relax further! This has been the plea for every relaxation. Has it ever been found true?

[h] Letter to Lord Radnor, p. 22. note.

[i] "In one of the best conducted Colleges in Oxford, every Candidate for admission is examined in Scripture history, both in the Old and New Testament, and *in the leading doctrines and principles as taught by the Church of England in her Catechism.*" Abp. of Canterbury's Speech, August 1, 1834.

Questions.

25. Has not the first advocate of this measure 'avowed[f] himself favourable to the removal of *all tests*, as far as they are employed as securities of Orthodoxy among our Members at large'—expressed the wish[g] that 'there were less of Dogmatism in our Articles'—implied[h] that 'they are unsuited *to the present state of Theological opinion*, and might be improved in accordance with the advances made in other scientific methods'—asserted[i], that 'a great deal of the false philosophy of former times is involved in the expressions of our formularies'—objected[k] to 'Articles of religious communion, [and therein to Creeds] as assuming an immoveable character, fatally adverse to all theological improvement'—and condemned[l] the 'adherence to them, as no less incongruous and injurious to Religion, than in a Society of Physicians, to make the maxims of Hippocrates or Galen the unalterable basis of their profession?'

26. Have we no ground for 'dreading[m] some attempt against the great doctrines of Christianity,' when the first proposer of this change, himself a Christian, puts[n] 'the Unitarian *on the same footing precisely* of earnest religious zeal and love for the Lord Jesus Christ, as any other Christian?'

Answer.

The passage concerning the Unitarians is misapprehended. Dr. Hampden states nothing positively about them, but that

[f] Dr. Hampden, p. 35. second edition.
[g] Ibid. p. 14. [h] Ibid. p. 42. [i] Ibid. p. 24. [k] Ibid. p. 22.
[l] Ibid. p. 22. [m] Letter, p. 18. [n] Dr. Hampden, p. 20.

they are egregious dogmatists, and that he himself greatly dislikes their dogmas[1]. How does this affect the question before us? And as to his opinions concerning Tests and Creeds and Articles, they may be (as I think some of them are) dangerous and unsound; but why should any individual's[2] most incautious or most heretical pamphlet prevent the Convocation from considering a change, and, if it be good, from adopting it? Or how would it affect the merits of the question if Dr. Hampden really were, what no one has ever heard that he was, the first proposer of this change? Out of Oxford, if I am not misinformed, the Bishop of Exeter first suggested such a change. In Oxford, we only know[3] that the New Statute is proposed to us, like every other, by the Board of Heads of Houses and Proctors.

Notes.

[1] I should be very sorry to misrepresent Dr. Hampden, but his statement does imply that the Unitarian may, in his opinion, feel "precisely the same earnest religious zeal and love for the Lord Jesus Christ," as they who believe that He became man "for us and for our salvation," and having become man, redeemed us by His precious blood. He considers also the questions between us and the Unitarians as relating only to *theological dogmatism*, not to *religious belief.* (Ibid.)

[2] Dr. H. cannot be looked upon as a mere individual, since he is a member of our initiative body, (the Board of Heads of Houses and Proctors,) and in the pamphlet quoted, he first attacked Subscription to the Articles, and the present proposal followed upon it.

[3] Formally: but if we find nearly the words of the new Statute, proposed beforehand in the "Letter to the Earl of Radnor," we cannot look upon the question separately from the opinions expressed in that Letter: and if the two Heads of Houses, who in their writings censure Undergraduate Subscription, at the same time advocate further changes, we can have no confidence that the change now

proposed, will not be the groundwork of further innovation.

Question.

27. Is it befitting the University, as the guardian of religious education, to frame her regulations with reference to temporary political excitement, or the state of political parties—to lean on man and not on God?

Answer.

And thus we end as we began, turning aside from the proposal itself, to conjectures [1], irrelevant and ill-founded, concerning the intentions and motives of its authors. And how easy were it to retort the charge upon those who would lean upon a merely human institution, never sanctioned by the Church, for the support of the Church and Christianity, and Christian education! But how much better to throw aside every imputation upon other men, and discuss a plain proposal in a plain manner, considering the Tests and their operation, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of both, comparing, in a word, the present and the proposed Statutes, their real nature and probable consequences, that we may give a well-considered vote for the better measure.

Note.

[1] No *conjectures* were offered as to the motives of the authors of the proposed change at the beginning of these Questions, nor are they at the end: but a notorious fact was alluded to, that its advocates continually urge that change upon us, as "calculated to make our position more defensible in Parliament," as "desired by our friends in Parliament," &c. &c. It will be fresh in men's minds that, during the last Term, the name of a distinguished lay-member of the Upper House was repeatedly used, as decisive with regard to the expediency or necessity of this change. If its advocates will cease urging its political expediency, its opponents will gladly drop a topic so disgraceful to our body.

NOTES.

Page 6. *Original intention of the Matriculation Test.*

The main object of the original test was to exclude papists. Lord Leycester's Letter to the Convocation, Oct. 5, 1581, enclosed a Schedule, in which the three first paragraphs were as follows.

"*Imprimis*, That whereas the old order of Matriculation is, that within six days of every Scholar's first coming to Oxford, he shall take an oath to observe the Statutes of this University, &c. and for as much as by the negligence and carelessness of many Heads, this hath been and daily is omitted, insomuch that many Scholars have lived here a long time being never registered in the University booke, nether at any time heretofore sworne to the said University, and by this means many papists have heretofore and may hereafter lurke among you, and be brought up by corrupt Tutors, nether yelding to God nor to her Majestie or your University theare bounden dutie, as hath of late yeares too much appeared, and is evident in sundry younge Students in your University, sum being atte Rome, sum in the Seminaries and other places, all out of her Majesties obedience, I have thought good to have this order following to be established.

"First, That no Scholler be admitted into any College or Hall of the Universitie, unless he first before the Vice-Chancellor subscribe to the Articles of Religion agreed upon, take the oathe of the Queen's Majestie supremacy, sweare to observe the Statutes of the Universitie if he be of lawful yeares to take an othe, and have his name regestred in the Matriculation boke, which is by Statute as I heare to remaine with the Chancellor or Vice-Chancellour, and have a note under the Vice-Chancellour's hand that he hath done the premisses, and the Head of the College or Hall of which he shall be, or some of the Deanes and Censors, doe at some convenient time signifie the said othe and Subscription to the whole company.

" Secondly, That for as much as sundry parents, being themselves recusants, or knowne or suspected papists, have sent their sonns to the Universitie, and dayley doe, and are desirous to have their sonns by all likelyhood trayned up in the same religion, and for that purpose have as it may appear certaine select Tutors among you, of whome at the least they hope well to have their children instructed after their owne desire, I have thought good also to wish, that by Act of Convocation it may be likewise established, that noe Tutor hereafter be allowed, but such as be of sound religion, and that under the hand of the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, and three Doctors of Div. and three Bach. of Div. or three Preachers, for that purpose assembled all togeather where it shall please the Vice-Chancellor."

The Letter and Schedule having been read, Nov. 2, 1581, the Convocation forthwith required the Oath of Supremacy to be taken at Matriculation; and shortly afterwards (Nov. 14,) ratified certain Decrees, (the basis of the present Matriculation Statute,) framed in accordance with the suggestions of the Chancellor, and concluding thus:

" *Item*, that all private Tutors or Readers hereafter shall be allowed by the consent of the Vice-Chancellour, the Head of the same house whereof he or they shall be, and also the consent of a Doct. of Devinitye or two Preachers at the least.—And that no Tutor or Reader now beeing that is or shall be by othe detected of vehement suspicion of Popery shall, after the Nativ. of Xt. next insuinge, retain any Pupill or Scholler, unless he doe, being thereunto required, purge himself before the Vice-Chancellour and Proctors by his own othe, or the hands of three Preachers in the Universitie."

And yet we are sometimes told, that the University has no " right to abolish the practice of Subscription. It was imposed not by herself but by the Church." And again, that " *accidentally*, the Subscription acts as an exclusion," whereas it is " rather an essential element in our system of religious education." Of course, I do not deny that what was originally designed for one purpose, may have been afterwards of use towards another, or that the indirect advantages of a law may not exceed its direct uses; but I conceive, that the proposed Statute whilst it removes the objections to the present Test, will in no way affect, what we are all equally anxious to maintain unimpaired, our sys-

tem of religious education, and our intimate connexion with the Church[a].

[a] No one doubts that the original signature of the Thirty-nine Articles was in part a test; but viewed in connection with preceding and subsequent regulations, it will appear as evidently that it was not a mere test: the object was not *only* to exclude Roman Catholicism, but to promote and build up a genuine Catholicism. For three years before (1578) the Thirty-nine Articles had been appointed (with other works of the Reformers, as Nowell's Catechism, Jewell's Apology, and others) as a lecture-book, to be illustrated by reference to Scripture and occasionally to the Fathers; and not only College but University terminal examinations in them had been prescribed, to be held by the Vice-Chancellor and the Divinity Professors. (The original Statute occurs in Wood, Annals, b. i. a. 1578.) In 1580 divers sermons were appointed, and sermon-notes prescribed, "in order that the word of God and Protestantism might increase and Romanism decay," (Wood, l. c. a. 1580,) and on account of the "disorderlie and uncharitable preachings by sum of the younger sort," preachers were to be, first, tried in their Colleges or Halls for one year, and to subscribe the Articles and the Book of Common Prayer; (ibid.) In 1581, the Subscription Statute was enacted, and accompanied by an enforcement of the previous Catechisings and Divinity Disputations, as redounding greatly to the glory of God (Wood, l. c. p. 207); and in 1608, we find among the *old* College "exercises of piety and devotion," which Abp. Bancroft recommends the student should frequent, weekly catechising, Articles of Religion publicly authorized to be read quarterly in all Colleges, Chapels, Refectories of Halls, that so the students from their younger years may be well acquainted with the ground of their faith, and may understand what it is whereunto they subscribe, either when they are Matriculated or when they take any Degree in the University. (Wood, p. 297.) In 1617, were further directions for College Catechetical Lectures in the Thirty-nine Articles, according to which they were to be proved from Holy Scripture, the ancient Fathers, and Councils, (Wood, p. 327, 8.) From this it appears, 1. that the Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles at Matriculation was part of a system for promoting true religion and sound doctrine, not merely for excluding Heretics; 2. that the idea of subscribing them upon personal knowledge of their scripturalness was no part of the original system, since they were to be read publicly, in order that persons might understand whereunto they subscribed; 3. that the authority of the Church was throughout recognised, as appears from the appeal to the ancient Fathers; 4. that subscription and sound religious instruction always went hand in hand. *B. D.*

Page 12. *Interpretations of the present Subscription.*

Thus one of the most zealous advocates for the present practice: "The religious instruction which the Students now receive from their teachers, before they enter the University, is such as enables them with suitable and sufficient knowledge to bear witness to their belief of the doctrines of the Church of England, as set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles, and to give *an implied promise of conformity to its discipline and worship.*" (Undergraduate Subscription, p. xi.) But so many and various are the senses put upon the present Subscription, that I do not pretend to reason upon any one of them. Compare, e. g. the preceding and the following explanations. "The meaning of subscribing is not that they fully understand all the Articles, but they will adhere to the Church of England." (Dr. Johnson.)—It is "tantamount to a declaration that the Subscribers belong to the Church of which these are the Articles, and accept them as true on that authority, and are willing to be instructed in them." (Bp. of Exeter, April 21, and May 22, 1834.)—"That they are of the Church of England, and hold no doctrine, so far as they know, contrary to the doctrines received in the same, and that they will conform, so long as they shall reside in the University, to the worship and Liturgy of the Established Church." (Explanation proposed in 1773.)—"The only interpretation which seems legitimately applicable to the act of Subscription is the Negation of decided Heresy—meaning by Heresy, a deliberate abandonment of the Church, and submission to a separate authority." (Mr. Sewell.)—The Subscribers declare, "that they believe, upon the authority of their instructors, the doctrines of the Church of England to be true, or agreeable to the word of God;" (Extracts from a Collection of Papers, &c. reprinted 1835, p. 36.) "that they are persuaded, and have no suspicion to the contrary, that the Church, of which they profess themselves to be members, does not maintain any false doctrines contrary to the true faith of a Christian," (Ibid. p. 29.) an acquiescence in the doctrines is all that is, or ever was, intended." (Ibid. p. 24.)—Within the last few days we have had two more explanations of the Subscription. "The least that it implies is, that the young man has read the Articles with attention, has maturely considered them, and, upon such consideration, believes them to be agreeable to the word of God." (Letter to a New

Member of the New Parliament.)—Another writer seems to describe the act as something very like a convenient substitute for the repetition of the Articles by heart, "analogous to teaching a child to say the Catechism or the Creed, before it can understand them." As "the child is first made to say the Catechism, and then gradually learns its fuller meaning," so "the University is beginning a course of instruction in the Articles, and the young man is first made to subscribe to the Articles, and then is gradually taught their fuller meaning. The principle in both cases is the same, the only difference being, that, in the one case, the mouth is the instrument, in the other, the hand. It would be obviously inconvenient to require a young person, coming up to Matriculation, to have the whole Book of Articles by heart; and the act of putting his hand to them seems exactly equivalent to the taking the words of the Catechism on his lips, and uttering them as his own. The mere reading of the Articles would not seem so completely to answer the purpose." (1835 and 1772, &c. p. 32.)

Now, so long as this Subscription is continued, it has been said, and properly said, both in 1772 and 1835, that "every Tutor ought to satisfy his pupils of the real intention and meaning of their Subscription." But it must be owned that all this variety of explanation does not make his task the more easy. Some, perhaps, will think it a valid objection to the Subscription itself. At the least, it seems decisive against the idea of an Authorized Explanation of our present practice[a].

[a] In this review, the author has been betrayed by a little haste into a forgetfulness of his usual and almost characteristic fairness. In order to deal fairly with the case, he ought, 1. to have distinguished between the representations of the advocates and the opponents of Subscription, for these one should not expect to agree. 2. Before he argued from the supposed disagreement, he ought to have examined, whether, amid the *verbal* disagreement of the advocates of Subscription, there was not one great principle running through them all, namely, that of submission to the Church. Until it can be shewn that this is not an important and necessary condition for all young minds, (and this writer so far from wishing to disparage Church authority, respects and values it,) discrepancy with regard to the mode of expressing this truth can be no valid objection against it; nor again, can any difference, as to the *degree* of assent implied, be an objection, if the highest degree may (as it can) rightly be required. By such a mode of proceeding any truth might

be represented as uncertain, and those who held it made to appear contradictory and ridiculous. For no two individuals would assign the same ground of conviction for the most acknowledged truths. Ask e. g. any two individuals to assign their reasons for their belief in a God, or even to state any one argument for that belief, as it exists in their own mind. Or ask them to reconcile St. Paul and St. James. If one were to string their statements together, and thence leave it to be inferred, that because they differed in some subordinate details their arguments were worthless, or that St. James and St. Paul could not be reconciled, or even that they had failed to shew that they could be reconciled, would any one think this right?

The author of the "Letter to the New Member," (an opponent of Subscription,) states as "*the least*, which Subscription implies," the very highest which it can possibly, in any case, imply, that the individual "on *mature* consideration, believes [as it would seem, on his own knowledge] the Articles to be agreeable to the word of God." With such statements in a defence of Subscription one has naturally nothing to do. Yet the discrepancy, between this and our view may make it desirable to delay any "authorized explanation of our present practice," until we shall have recovered more from the Pseudo-Protestant notions about Church authority, now afloat among men, lest we compromise principles, or establish a low and insufficient explanation, as *the* meaning of the signature of the Articles. *B. D.*

Page 14. *Church Authority.*

But, some will say, "This act of obedience recognizes the authority of the Church which drew up the Articles; and the Church herself declares that she has 'authority in controversies of faith:' and the younger the Subscriber, or the less he knows of the Articles, so much the more valuable his subscription to them, for so much the more distinctly he recognizes the great principle of Church Authority. To abandon the present practice would be to 'strengthen the faulty notions of the day, which make private judgment every thing, authority and the Church nothing:' and instead of fostering a Christian frame of mind, an humble, teachable, submissive, confiding, in one word, 'Catholic spirit,' it would encourage the prevailing spirit of the times, disputatious, profane, self-dependent, sceptical, Heretical." I would not willingly misrepresent the sentiments of those who connect Church Authority with Undergraduate Subscription. Scarcely any one argument against the proposed Statute weighs with me so much as a reluctance to offend the truly conscientious men who hold

these sentiments. Yet why are they offended? Their principle is not disputed, but only its application to the point at issue.

For, not to dwell upon the fact that some Undergraduates every year subscribe the Articles who are *not*[a] members of the Church of England, what really is or ought to be the Authority of the Church in matters of faith with respect to her own members? Undoubtedly it is the province of the Church to introduce and guide them to the doctrines of Christianity; and they should admit that there is a *presumption* in favour of whatever doctrine she proposes to them; they owe her *deference;* they should be willing to believe, before they are capable of enquiring, that what she holds is true. Since we are not speaking either of the authority of the Church to decree rites and ceremonies, or of her right and obligation to decide upon Articles of faith and exclude heretics from her pale[b], this is the only sense of "Church Authority" with which we are concerned. But the precise limits of this deference, or the strength of this presumption, no one can determine. They must vary in different persons, at different ages, with different opportunities and capacities for enquiry. Nay, the presumption in favour of any particular Church must be affected[c] by the known existence of other Churches teaching

[a] If persons, for whom the University was not formed, wish to avail themselves of its benefits, it is surely for them to adapt themselves to her, not for her to form her regulations with reference to them, since they must always be a small exception. Besides, if foreigners or others, not naturally belonging to our Church, recognize her as a true Church, they will admit her authority, if not, they had better not come to her. *B. D.*

[b] But what does the Church's power to decide upon Articles of Faith mean, unless persons are obliged (morally) to accept her decision? to obey her, until or unless she should be proved to them to have decided anti-scripturally, not to suspend their assent, until she be *proved* to them to have decided scripturally? *B. D.*

[c] This would be true, if a person had to choose a Church for himself, but not if he has been rightly educated in a Church. He will not suspect her Faith beforehand, because other Churches differ from her; for this is the very ground upon which the Deist would persuade men to suspect our whole Faith, because there are apparently honest, learned, and, after their degree, pious Jews, or Mohammedans, or Heathens. Even the Roman Catholic should adhere to his Church until he see it to be contrary to the word of God. *B. D.*

different doctrines, or of dissenting sects, or even by the reputation of individual Dissenters for probity, learning, and piety. In general, of course, the greater the incapacity of the pupil, the more deference he owes to his instructors; and the less he knows of opposition to any doctrine, the stronger is the presumption in its favour. But as this principle of Church authority must in no case be lost sight of, so on the other hand must the presumption never be confounded with proof, nor deference be demanded for the Church as if she could not err, or as if her Articles were inspired, or as if her instructions superseded, I do not say the right, but the *duty*, of private enquiry. So far surely we are agreed. And we agree also as to the facts, if not entirely as to the terms employed, respecting the tendency of the age, and the difference between the Heretical and the Catholic spirit.

There is something invidious indeed in contrasting the perversion of one good principle with the due cultivation of another. The disposition to believe, and the disposition to enquire, are both of them good, and both are implanted in our minds for the best purposes; and each of them, it must be recollected, may become excessive or depraved; the one degenerating into the spirit of scepticism and heresy, and the other into credulity, superstition, and a spirit not Catholic but Roman Catholic. But here again we have no real difference. I admit the tendency of the age, and all its evil. The only question is, what is the best mode of counteracting it. To overstrain a principle may easily lead to a reaction; and this very tendency of the age may be traced in part to the excessive demands of the Romish Church upon the principle of Church Authority. It is a question of discretion, not of principle. No one doubts that the child when he repeats the Creed, or the youth brought to Confirmation, leans in part at least upon Church Authority; and so far from abandoning the principle, or denying its value or its necessity, both during education and afterwards, I wish to cherish it duly; but I object to this particular *mode* of cherishing it, as extremely likely to defeat its own object. Yet again, I do not blame the young man who, in deference to his superiors and instructors, subscribes what he does not know. I grant at once, that the University could not have expected a just knowledge of all the Articles from all or from any of the Candidates for Matriculation; and that many whose knowledge of them was exceedingly limited may have subscribed them, and

were blameless in so doing, in a spirit of dutiful submission to the Church. But the obedience which they may have done well to pay, *we* may have done ill in requiring. Well may the defenders of the present Subscription plead antiquity and prescription in its favour! If the matter were now for the first time referred to Convocation at the suggestion of another Lord Leicester, we should discover, perhaps, with little difficulty, that in calling for the signature of every young man of 18 to the most extensive formulary of faith set forth by our Church, comprehending almost every point of difference between herself and every other Church or Sect, we were, without any necessity, asking *too much*. Put the Subscription upon knowledge, or upon deference to Church Authority, or upon both together, after many years' experience in tuition, and the constant practice of explaining the sense of the Subscription as well as I could[d], I at least feel strongly that we ask too much. And if we do, *we* are the persons to consider the subject, and provide the remedy, without waiting for complaints and petitions from the candidates for Matriculation, or their parents. But what denial or abandonment of principle is there in this? I only contend, that the University should inculcate a due measure of deference to the Church by well-directed instruction, not by an "act of obedience," as Subscription is termed, equivocal and unexplained; that this particular test was quite needless for the purpose it professedly serves; that it is by no means unobjectionable in itself, and must perpetually appear to the students or their friends even more objectionable than it really is; and that so far from this Subscription being a Church question, it is imposed by the University, and by this University exclusively, and not by the Church; nay, that the act is rather at variance with her principles than in accordance with them, since the Church never has required Subscription to the Articles at all from her Lay-members for the highest purposes or on the most solemn occasions, and in the only instance in which she herself calls for Subscription to them she makes not the slightest reference to her Authority, but requires from the subscriber an

[d] But, it may be asked, (and it is asked with great and real respect,) what was the explanation given by one, who only "does not blame a young man, who subscribes what he does not know [on his own enquiry] in a spirit of dutiful submission to the Church?" *B. D.*

express acknowledgment that they are "agreeable to the Word of God."

[a] The Church rightly and kindly sets forth as the "terms of her communion" the lowest degree of knowledge, essential to a Christian man, since otherwise some of her simplest and most valuable members must have been excluded: but the Church called upon the Universities to do more, not indeed to propose "terms of communion," but to teach religious truth, and to guard against Heretical pravity; and since those only can be taught religious truth who are willing to receive it, she has required this act of submission to her "authority in matters of faith," before she attempts to impart it. And the Author of the above "Answers" will be among the last to maintain, that a proportional increase of religious knowledge is not necessary, as a balance and corrective of increased intellectual cultivation: that the student is not forced upon views of Christian doctrine not apparently contained in the Apostles' Creed or the Catechism of the Church: that questions, which the peasant may be spared, with regard to the blessed Trinity, his own free-will, and the Divine Foreknowledge, the nature and character of man's works both before and after Justification, the nature of the blessed Sacraments—these and other questions, upon which our Articles either speak alone, or more fully than the formularies intended for universal use or for elementary instruction, must be brought before him: in proportion to his higher knowledge he is exposed to greater danger, and needs therefore additional safeguards: the Articles render to him the same service which the Apostles' Creed and the Church Catechism do to the unlettered Christian; as written by men, abundantly endued with God's holy Spirit, they are a light to his feet, and a lantern to his path," in ways which he alone is called to tread. *B. D.*

THE END.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

☞ *The expediency of substituting a Declaration for the signature of the Articles at Matriculation having been widely canvassed in the University, and even in the public prints, the discussion of the Question is forced upon those, who think the character and existence of the University as a Church-Institution at stake in this measure: it is hoped, therefore, that it will not be deemed premature to submit the following Questions to Members of Convocation.*

1. Is the University willing to admit, that they and their ancestors for the last 250 years have been acting wrongly in requiring Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles at Matriculation? or do they think that their system has been right and beneficial, and only wish to clear it from misconception?

2. If the latter, is it not the more manly and straightforward, as well as the safest course, (should any further step be necessary,) to explain that system, rather than, by changing it, to convey what we do not mean, and virtually to yield to the erroneous principles of the day?

3. Is not the abolition of Subscription just the

the University to receive all persons of any or no religious profession ; one of them (Lord Melbourne) having proposed, that the "matter should be brought about in an amicable manner by a sort of *compromise* on both sides ;" another (Lord Brougham) having stated, that " if Oxford would put herself on the same footing as Cambridge, even as relates to Matriculation alone, a great point would be gained to the Dissenters ?"

4. Is it not more in harmony with the practice of our Church to *explain* regulations, which, though wholesome in themselves, have been misunderstood, than to abolish them? (see, *e. g.* Preface to Common Prayer Book, Rubric after Communion Service, &c.) and has not the University in a very grave matter notoriously adopted this principle ? (see the Epinomis to the Statute-Book.)

5. Is it possible, that any Declaration can be made, which shall realize all the objects of our Subscription ?

6. Is it not an advantage in the form of Subscription, that, while it does not exclude those, who honestly sign in mere acquiescence in the truth of the doctrine of the Church, it leads men on to sign with a higher and fuller conviction, according to their different degrees of religious attainment, character, and knowledge ?

7. Is it not a disadvantage in the form of a Declaration, that it admits but one, and that the *lowest*, degree of acquiescence or assent which the University thinks admissible in any of its Members?

8. Do not most of those who now enter the University, sign the Articles with a full conviction, that the truths therein contained are founded in Holy Scripture—either as the result of their own search into Scripture, or as being the Articles of the Church to which they belong, or as being acknowledged by elder and more advanced Christians? and has not this a good effect in promoting the knowledge of Scripture truth; and again in fostering a humble, teachable, and so a Christian frame of mind?

9. Are not those comparatively few, who (without reference either to the Scriptural character of the Articles, or to the authority of the Church, or of their elders) sign the Articles, *merely*, as "not knowing that they hold any opinions opposed [a] to them?"

[a] The test, proposed *and rejected* by Convocation in 1771, 2, first as a Declaration, then as an explanation of the Signature of the XXXIX Articles, was, "se esse de ecclesia Anglicana, et *nullam doctrinam tenere, quantum ipsi sciunt, contrariam doctrinis in eadem receptis,* necnon *se fore conformes, quamdiu in Academia vixerint, cultui et liturgiæ istius Ecclesiæ, prout ea nunc legibus est stabilita.* See Preface to Reprint of Bp. Horne's Letter to Lord North, p. xiv.

10. Have not many of those, who now sign the Articles with a full conviction of their truth, (Qu. 8.) been induced to make themselves acquainted with them, in consequence of their knowing that they would be required to sign them? and has not the knowledge of the holy truths therein contained, which they have thus acquired, been often of the greatest value to them?

11. Will not persons, who, under the present system, would have made themselves acquainted with the Articles and sound statements of our Church on the main doctrines of Christianity, be discouraged from so doing, if a mere Declaration is substituted for Subscription? and will not those, who have hitherto trusted the Church or their elders, be led to distrust them?

12. Will not the standard of religious knowledge, attainments, and feeling, be lowered, by proposing to members of our own Church to profess *simply* that they "do *not oppose*[a] any of the doctrines of *their* Church?" may not this profession be made by persons indifferent to all religious truth? and does it not encourage that indifference?

13. Is not a promise to "*conform* to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England" sure to

[a] See note, p. 3.

make persons think that *outward* conformity alone is required? would it not also be a more strict and unbending, as well as a more external, engagement? would not, *e. g.* even such a promise be broken, whenever the individual who made it, omitted attending her daily service, or receiving the Holy Sacrament?

14. Are not such negative statements, of necessity, cold, heartless, and irreverent, and calculated to engender contempt of religious truth?

15. Since this measure is professedly one of alleviation, will not persons be prepared to sign the Declaration, if it be adopted, in the lowest sense of which it is capable? and will not lax and vague views of religious truth thereby be encouraged?

16. Is it not the duty, on the contrary, and the wish of the University, as a conscientious guardian of the younger members of our Church, to attest fully, warmly, and authoritatively, her view of Scripture truths and duties?

17. Would not the University on such a plan be receding from the character of a teacher to that of a mere excluder of those who oppose it?

18. Since the University, by fixing the age of Twelve, as the earliest at which the Articles should

be signed, implies, that, before that age, persons could not understand or be instructed in what the Church wishes them to assent to;—should not we, by abolishing Subscription at Eighteen, in like manner express an opinion, that persons at Eighteen are unable, even with the guidance of others, to understand them?

19. If we declare, that persons at Eighteen cannot be taught to understand the Doctrines of the Church as contained in the Articles, are they not unable also then to oppose them? and if so, why have any test or declaration at all, any more than in our great Schools?

20. If, on the other hand, we abandon Subscription, in compliance with the outcry, that "persons ought not to be required to sign that, of whose truth they have not convinced themselves;" should we not be strengthening the faulty notions of the day, which make private judgment every thing, authority and the Church nothing?

21. Is this worthy of us? and is a learned and thoughtful body to guide opinions or to follow them, to give way to error or to resist it?

22. Should we not, by this compliance, strengthen the expectations of our adversaries, and shake the confidence of the country in our firmness?

23. Did not this same subject occupy the University for above a year in the years 1771, 2, and was not the change then, after full consideration, rejected by a large majority? In what way then are things now altered, that we are to be called upon, without previous consideration, to change in a few weeks the practice of 250 years?

A BACHELOR OF DIVINITY.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

A FEW PLAIN REASONS

For retaining our Subscription to the Articles at Matriculation, in preference to the subjoined Declaration, which it is proposed to substitute.

"I *A. B.* declare that I do, so far as my knowledge extends, assent "to the Doctrines of the United Church of England and Ireland as "set forth in her Thirty-nine Articles; that I will conform to her "Liturgy and Discipline; and that I am ready and willing to be in-"structed in her Articles of Religion, as required by the Statutes of "this University."

BECAUSE important changes, where Religion is concerned, unsettle men's minds and principles, and ought not to be hazarded without the clearest and most imperative *necessity*.

BECAUSE, to exchange for an *untried* speculation a practice, in connexion with which the University has, by the Divine blessing, for more than two centuries, experienced the happiest results of her system in the diffusion of sound religious knowledge, savours little of ordinary *prudence*.

BECAUSE, though the proposed Declaration should be found "quite *equivalent* as a test to the present act of Subscription," (see the Letter to the Earl of Radnor, p. 22.) it would be destitute of the venerable sanction of *antiquity* and *prescription*, and become a precedent for any further alterations, which caprice or laxity of principle might from time to time suggest.

BECAUSE, under the shelter of the qualifying clause, "*so far as my knowledge extends*," absolute ignorance of our Articles would nullify the whole declaration of assent, which might consequently be made even by an *infidel*.

BECAUSE a person of adverse persuasion might be *studiously* ignorant of the whole of their detail, readily promise an outward conformity to usages which he would consider indifferent, and profess a willingness to be instructed in that which he would become acquainted with only to impugn.

BECAUSE, under the proposed change, the *less* were known of the Articles, the *more* readily might the Declaration be made; and, consequently, the motive for acquiring some general acquaintance with their import, which now so naturally influences those who are to subscribe them, must in a great measure cease.

BECAUSE the proposed alteration forcibly inculcates the dangerous principle, that even the young and ignorant are no longer to take any thing upon *trust;* to feel no deference for *authority*, and to admit nothing, which their limited capacities, and still more limited attainments, have not yet enabled them fully to comprehend.

BECAUSE the qualifying clause "*so far as my knowledge extends*," gratuitously suggests the idea of points to be *disputed*, when that knowledge shall have advanced; and of *doubts* and *difficulties* to be encountered, which might never even have occurred

to a mind of ordinary docility and candour without the bias of such an unhappy prejudice.

BECAUSE the direct tendency of such a prejudice is, to encourage a general spirit of *cavil* and *scepticism*.

BECAUSE, whatever is alleged of *mockery* or *absurdity* in requiring of young men a Subscription to Articles, with the details of which they are not fully acquainted, would apply with far greater force to the practice of accustoming a child to annex "I believe" to the Articles of his Creed, at a time when the mysterious truths which he rehearses are wholly above his comprehension.

BECAUSE, nevertheless, it is an established maxim of wisdom and experience to enlist the *prepossessions* and *prejudices* of youth on the side of Religion: none so readily attaining in maturer years to the full conviction of religious truth, as those who are thus happily predisposed.

BECAUSE, consequently, those who subscribe our Articles, having already a general knowledge of their import, and implicitly and modestly relying for the rest on the wisdom and authority of the *Church* and of their appointed *teachers*, must be considered to be in far more hopeful training for a cordial and conscientious reception of the whole, when their judgment shall have been matured, than those, who by the very terms of the Declaration, which they were required to utter, would be maintaining an *independent* judgment unbecoming their

years, fostering a *self-sufficient* spirit, expressing present *doubt*, and implying the chance at least of future *dissent*.

BECAUSE much of the clamour which has been raised against Subscription to the Articles, has originated in the ignorance and misconception of those who confound such Subscription with the obligation of an *oath;* whose understandings indeed it would be well to enlighten on the subject, but whose unfounded cavils against what they do not understand are a very unintelligible motive for our yielding what we both understand and value.

BECAUSE there is still less reason for attempting to conciliate others, whom no concessions could satisfy, and who in fact wish for nothing less than the improvement of our system.

BECAUSE the proposed change is obviously but a modified indication of that restless spirit of innovation and spurious liberality, which would abandon every *test*, reject all *authority*, resolve faith itself into individual *knowledge*, and cast contempt on the very notion of *Orthodoxy* and *Christian Unity*.

QUINQUAGENARIUS.

Oxford, April 9, 1835.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

Meaning of Subscription.

THE opponents of Subscription to the Articles seem to lay great stress on one argument, viz. that its defenders are not agreed as to its meaning. It may be worth while to enquire how far this is the case.

In the first place it is apparent, that those who prefer Subscription to *any Declaration*, cannot consider it equivalent to any Declaration, not even to their own explanation; and consequently their explanations cannot be expected to agree literally, though they ought in the main to agree in principle. I say in the main, because if one or two misunderstand a plain thing, it does not follow that it is not generally understood.

In the second place it may be seen, by inspecting any list of different explanations, that some of them speak to one point, others to another point, and consequently they may use expressions entirely different without contradicting one another. One speaks as to the state of mind in which a person would subscribe, another to the precise point where Subscription becomes exclusive. These are as different as the circumference of a circle from its radius and centre, and yet they may both speak truly, as a particular circle may be as truly distin-

guished by a part or property of its circumference, (see Euc. III.) as by its centre and radius.

It has been well stated by the Author of "Questions addressed to Members of Convocation," that the principle running through all the explanations is that of "submission to the Church." Every person subscribing, though he may be inclined ever so stoutly to deny it, does subscribe on this principle, unless he can answer the following question affirmatively: "Would you as readily subscribe, i. e. acknowledge, a set of Articles framed for the occasion by an individual unknown to you, and proposed by an individual equally unknown?" He may not acknowledge the principle in so many words, but he does act upon it, in so much as his willingness to subscribe is influenced by his knowledge of the judgment by which the Articles have been approved. If this principle be wrong, if it be not the very foundation of our unity of belief, then let us give up the act by which it is recognized and enforced.

An objection remains, drawn from the "implied promise of conformity" asserted in some explanations. Now this can only be alleged to exist, in as much as the Articles imply the duty of conformity. See Art. 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 33, 35. and with Art. 35. see Hom. tom. ii. Hom. 1, 8, &c. "Of the right use of the Church." "Of the place and time of Prayer," &c. But more than I can say is conveyed in the excellent remarks of the author of the above-named pamphlet, p. 33, 34.

THE

VIEWS OF OUR REFORMERS

AS BEARING ON

RELIGIOUS DISSENT.

OXFORD,

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LONDON.

1835.

THE

VIEWS OF OUR REFORMERS

AS BEARING ON

RELIGIOUS DISSENT.

One of the pamphlets[a] which has had most circulation amongst us at present, has put forward, though obliquely, the assertion, that the change of late contemplated, or rather the further changes, not only in our University but Church system, which its Author himself considers as desirable, are only, so to say, a developement of the Reformation, and in furtherance of the wishes and opinions of the Reformers. His words are, speaking of articles of faith and adherence to them as fatally adverse to all religious improvement,

"Surely our Reformers had no such view in drawing up our Articles. They did what they could in those times, as prudent men." P. 22.

And again, he considers it a Christian duty to inquire,

"Whether improvements might not be made in them" (the Articles) "commensurate with the improvements in

[a] Observations on Religious Dissent, by R. D. Hampden, D.D.

other scientific methods, and calculated to embrace a wider extent of Christian profession, without any sacrifice of real Christian truth, in furtherance indeed of the views of the Reformers themselves." p. 43.

The views of the Reformers, however, thus recommended to the notice of the University, can hardly be supposed to weigh with the writer himself, since he has said in his Bampton Lectures, (p. 359.) even of the Apostolic Fathers,

"Were we to endeavour to form a system of divinity out of these writers, it would be found necessary to explain away many of their positions and expressions, in order to bring them into accordance with the admitted truths of Scripture."

Now if those who had heard the teaching of the Apostles, or those who followed them, have no claim to be listened to in matters of theology, I certainly know of none which can be offered on the part of the Reformers; who would themselves have been the first to disclaim the advocacy of any system of divinity, which embodied opinions in opposition to those of the early Church, or to the old ecclesiastical writers; to whom on the contrary the soundest amongst them, Cranmer, Ridley, and others, always appealed in support of their own views against those of the Papists, or of others who differed from them.

Dr. Hampden's views of authority ought then, consistently, to prevent *his* being influenced by the opinions of the Reformers. But there are others,

who *do*, and justly, attach high importance to the opinions of men, who suffered and wrought so much in support of the doctrines of the Church of England; and to these, as likely to be carried away by such assertions as the above, some short account is here offered of the practice and *matured* opinions of the leading Reformers in this country.

It is the more necessary to confine ourselves to these, because, without detracting from the just claims to respect and gratitude which the Reformation has upon us, it may fairly be said, that we are too apt to appeal indiscriminately to the authority of all the great men on that side of the question, to quote their opinions without examining whether they were those in which they ultimately acquiesced, or whether all their opinions *must* be right, to sanctify their very errors, to value them merely as Protestants, instead of as Catholics in the best sense of the word. For in referring to them we surely ought to remember, that we are referring to writers, whose opinions were undergoing a certain degree of change; who, from the position they were compelled to assume of hostility to the Romish system, might be, and were, led sometimes into errors on the other side; who, in recoiling from the precipice before them on the first impulse of danger, might sometimes lose their balance, and be in some hazard of falling backwards. And this is one reason why we shall do well to look chiefly to our own Reformers, because

they seem, less than any, to have attempted to strike out new systems of their own, and to have best succeeded in realising the calm and cautious spirit, which ought to characterise a well-conducted Reformation.

It is not very clear, perhaps, what the author of Observations on Religious Dissent does mean specifically to attribute to our Reformers, or to what acts or notions he alludes in the passages quoted; but it would appear, that in thinking the Reformation very incomplete, he holds, that the Reformers themselves must have intended, in developing it further, to lean to more liberal views, and to embrace a wider extent of communion. Now no doubt, if, without what they conceived to be an abandonment of Christian truth, greater external unity could have been secured, such an union would have been desirable, and would probably have been endeavoured by the Reformers; but the very point in question is, whether such an union, as this writer appears to contemplate, would not have been in their opinion an abandonment of Christian truth. And we must look, in our judgment of so grave a matter, not to an assertion, surely somewhat vague, of what their ulterior views were, but to what they thought, and wrote, and did to the very last.

What then was the known conduct of the Reformers? In the first place, it is matter of history, that in Edward's reign various commissions were appointed, for inquiries into cases of heretical pra-

vity. Now, of course, it does not enter into my purpose, to say any thing in defence of punishing heresy at all; much less, of consigning a fellow creature to the flames for holding such and such principles, however impious, absurd, and dangerous. It might indeed, I think, be fairly questioned, whether the principles of the present day are not in the other extreme; and whether, holding certain opinions to be highly criminal and pernicious, it is not the duty of a Christian nation to offer some check upon their obtaining publicity, and the means of spreading their contagion amongst the ignorant and unwary. At present, however, all that is attempted to be argued from the facts alluded to is, that the animus of the Reformers was essentially opposed to the liberal views imputed to them, and that they were not very likely to have widened their terms of communion, with the view of including those, whom we shall see they, (whether right or wrong in doing so,) took every means to stigmatise as heretics, and to punish as criminals.

In 1547—8, then, we find that divers of the Anabaptists, having fled from Germany hither, "began to infect the realm with strange and heretical opinions, and particularly spake contemptibly of the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper." Gardiner and Ridley were appointed to deal with two of them in Kent, and, to judge from[b] the account

[b] Ridley's Life of Ridley, p. 221.

given by Gloster Ridley in his Life, Bishop Ridley seems to have been the most active and earnest of the two in the execution of his commission.

Take again the well-known instances[c] of capital punishment inflicted for heresy during the same reign, that, viz. of George Van Parre, a Dutchman, who had been accused of asserting "that God the Father was only God, and that Christ was not very God," and who, having refused to abjure his error, was burnt in Smithfield, April 25, 1551; and that of Joan Bocher, commonly called Joan of Kent, who was burnt May 2, 1550, for reviving part of the Valentinian heterodoxy, and denying that our Lord took flesh of the blessed Virgin. Abp. Cranmer himself was the person, who prevailed upon Edward to sign the death-warrant of the latter; and there can be no reasonable doubt, that Ridley, who had been engaged in the task of bringing her back if possible to the true faith, concurred in the sentence, however abhorrent to the notions of the present day. Now does not the bare mention of such facts prove at once, that, whatever the intentions of these great men were, they could not have been to relax in favour of those, who held tenets which the Author of Observations on Dissent, however himself differing from them, would probably characterize as opposed

[c] Burnet, vol. ii. part i. p. 230, 231.

to the scholastic methods of theology, rather than by any harsher term? And, if so, what does his assertion respecting the Reformers amount to? It may be said, indeed, of Joan Bocher, that she did controvert one of the facts of the Creed, which, even according to this writer's[d] views, might perhaps exclude her from the title of Christian. But this, after all, depends upon the manner in which the Creed is construed; and it would be well, if he had here told us distinctly, what opinions are, in his view, opposed to the facts of the Creed; or, indeed, in what sense all the Articles of the Creed are called *facts*. At all events he will not, surely, maintain, that the heresy of Joan Bocher was more fatal and dangerous to the Christian character, than that of the Socinian, to whom he yet allows he cannot deny the name of Christian; nay, whom he seems to put[e] "on the same footing precisely of earnest religious zeal and love with any other Christian," himself apparently considering "the principle of his dissent" to be "*theological dogmatism*, and not *religious belief* properly so called." Or if he does maintain it, in the execution of George Van Parre, who was moreover an Arian rather than a Socinian, (whatever else may be thought of it,) the Reformers

[d] See Observations, p. 13, 14, &c. and Postscript, p. 7, 8.

[e] P. 20, 21. Perhaps in this second expression, Dr. Hampden does not mean to affirm that he does so put him, but only to argue hypothetically; but surely we are scarcely warranted in appearing to grant so much, without guarding our expressions.

at least shewed their own determination to adhere to and to uphold most unbendingly the "dogmatism" of "the Athanasian;" nor could they ever have regarded as a fellow Christian, one, whom they punished for his tenets by a death more painful than that of common criminals.

These are not the only instances in the reign of Edward, which show that the Reformers did not compromise with those who vented heretical opinions. Collier, in his Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii. p. 266, gives at some length the recantations of John Champneys and John Ashton, who had been convened before an ecclesiastical court in the year 1548; and Burnet speaks of some tradesmen in London, who were brought before an ecclesiastical commission in 1549, and were persuaded "to abjure their former opinions . . . . one of them being also commanded to carry a faggot next Sunday at St. Paul's, when there should be a sermon setting forth his heresy." Burnet, vol. ii. part i. p. 229.

But the harsh conduct adopted towards the Popish Bishops, who were not only removed from their sees, but placed in a confinement, more or less severe, according to circumstances; and, still more, towards the Princess Mary, who was scarcely allowed liberty of conscience for herself and for a very small proportion of her household; or, again, the little allowance made towards the scruples even of good men, when the ceremonies only

of the Church were concerned, (as exemplified in the case of Bishop Hooper,) may serve to show still more fully, how much Dr. Hampden has mistaken the feelings of the Reformers. In the latter case it must be remembered, that Cranmer and Ridley received from the council a legal sanction for proceeding to consecrate him without the usual forms; and that they not only declined doing so, but that Hooper was for some time[f] under confinement in consequence of his obstinacy.

Let the following passages from the Remains of Bishop Ridley, recording, be it remembered, the matured opinions of the soundest, most cautious, and most learned of our Reformers, when himself about to seal his testimony to the true doctrines of the Gospel with his blood, be contrasted with, what I should call, the pseudo-liberality, which the

[f] It is true, however, that Hooper, in addition to his refusal to submit, had thought fit to preach against the customs of the Church, and had otherwise shown a degree of contumacy in his proceedings. It may not perhaps be irrelevant to refer also to Calvin's views, as developed in a letter to the Duke of Somerset, then Protector, to show that Cranmer, Ridley, &c. were not alone in their illiberality, if it be such. He there speaks of two sorts of troublesome people in England. One sort, those they called Gospellers, whom he pronounced to be "men of whimsey and enthusiasm," who, "if they might have their will, would quickly confound all order and public settlement." The other, those who leant to the old superstition. Both, he adds roundly, ought "gladio ultore coerceri quem tibi tradidit Dominus." Collier, vol. ii. p. 284.

passages in Dr. Hampden's pamphlet do not indeed absolutely impute to Reformers, but insinuate to be in furtherance of their views.

In a letter to Bradford, he says,

"Whereas you write of the outrageous rule that Satan our ghostly enemy beareth abroad in the world, whereby he stirreth and raiseth so pestilent and heinous heresies; as some, to deny the blessed Trinity; some, the Divinity of our Saviour CHRIST; some, the Divinity of the HOLY GHOST; some, the Baptism of Infants; some, original sin, and to be infected with the errors of the Pelagians; and to rebaptize those that have been baptized with CHRIST's baptism already; alas! Sir, this doth declare this time and these days to be wicked in deed."

In his treatise on the Sacrament he says,

"All do detest, abhor, and condemn, the wicked heresy of the Messalians, which said that the holy Sacrament can neither do good nor harm. All do also condemn the *wicked* Anabaptists, which putteth no difference betwixt the LORD's table and the LORD's meat, and their own."

And in a letter to Grindal, parts of which only have been published, speaking of Knox, he condemns strongly the principles on which that nonconformist went;

"To depart," he says, "from that, that the sentences of the old ancient writers do more allow, without a warrant of GOD's word, I cannot think it any godly wisdom."

And in another passage, of which I have seen a transcript, and which is found in a MS. at Cambridge, he expresses his opinion, that Alasco should have been required to conform in some degree,

when in England, to the English ceremonies, as a condition of being tolerated. This at least was not the man to mince matters with either heretics or separatists, except such words as "detest, abhor, and condemn," are to go for nothing.

In the absence of any mention of his authority on the part of Dr. Hampden, it seems probable that his assertion as to the Reformers may have reference to the wish of Cranmer, if possible, to draw up a form of Confession of Faith in common with the German divines. But, if this be his meaning, is it so very certain that the Articles themselves, to which he alludes, as though *their alteration* would be the fulfilment of such a wish, are not rather its fulfilment *as they stand at present?*

What are the facts of the case? In 1535, Bp. Fox, and Heath (afterwards Abp. of York in Mary's reign, but then leaning towards the Reforming party) were in Germany, and employed as well in other business, as in negociating a treaty of alliance with the German Princes, and the drawing up a joint Confession of Faith. In 1538, ambassadors were sent over by the German princes, with whom Cranmer with other bishops and divines immediately opened a conference. It was arranged that they should first settle the chief articles of faith, and then proceed to the abuses and corruptions alleged to have crept into the Church. *On the first point of their enquiry they agreed;* but ultimately the conference was broken off on these three

points, the denial of the cup to the laity, the custom of private propitiatory masses, and the prohibition of marriage to the clergy. All these points, which Henry VIII. then wished to retain, are, as it is needless to mention, ruled in our present Articles as the Germans would have had them, and the editor of Abp. Cranmer's Remains, from whose Preface the above statements have been taken, has published, in his Appendix, what he conceives to have been the Articles agreed on, which will be found, I believe, to contain in the most essential points nothing but the doctrine of the Forty-two Articles of Edward VI. and that of the existing Articles of the Church of England.

In 1548, the negociation was again renewed. Several German divines came over to this country, with the express view, as is commonly said, of assisting in framing a Confession of Faith; and after some delay, which convinced Cranmer of the impossibility of putting them forth *formally* as the joint Articles of the German and English divines, the Articles of 1552 were, as the title[g] sets forth, "agreed upon by the bishops and other learned and godly men," in the last Convocation of King Edward, not only "to root out the discord of opinions," but to "*establish the agreement of true religion.*" Substantially then they did what was intended, substantially they did come forth as the

[g] Sparrow's Collection of Records.

common Articles of the English and German Churches, for they may be considered in a great measure the joint work of the English and German divines, and they were probably (as Mr. Jenkyns has, I think, successfully shown) founded on the Articles of 1538, themselves founded on the Confession of Augsburg. Whatever then may have been the wish of Cranmer, or of other Reformers, as to joining with the German Churches in one common confession; there seems to be no ground whatever for inferring, that it would have been different from that which we use; certainly none to think that they would have included those, in whose favour apparently Dr. Hampden would wish to alter it. But if the Articles did not, in this sense, fulfil Cranmer's wish, they will shew, what is still more to the purpose, that he had learnt to consider his former intentions impracticable or undesirable; for why else were the Forty-two Articles put forth at all? It was a very odd mode, to say the least, of furthering the objects imputed to him. There was no necessity for putting forth any Articles. The Reformers were at that time quite their own masters, and ruled every thing their own way; and this, their free act, dates amongst the last of their ecclesiastical measures, so as quite to exclude the notion of any subsequent change of opinion.

But the present Thirty-nine Articles are themselves no mean proof that the former Articles, with which they tally so nearly, met the intentions of

Cranmer, if they indeed were, to draw up a form of doctrine agreeing with the views of the German Reformers. It is well known that many of our divines came back from the continent, after the Marian persecution, tinctured with the opinions of the German school; and yet very little change was made in the new Confession of Faith drawn up in 1562. Even at the present day, it is notorious that very many of the Dissenters, and certainly all, whom the Reformers (interpret their wishes as we may) could ever have been anxious to embrace, have no objection to our Articles. The real objection on the part of those, who then separated from us, the real obstacle to our union with the Germans formerly, or with the Dissenters now, lies rather in the Liturgy, the ceremonies, and the government of the Church, which is not the point at present proposed for alteration.

It is scarcely necessary then to draw out the opinions of the Reformers, as far as they would have been likely to bear on changes here, though the conduct of Cranmer and Ridley already referred to, and the passage, quoted from the latter in reference to Knox, may show, how little they would have been disposed to concede further to idle objections to the Liturgy. I say further, because all the compliance that had been thought possible or expedient, had been already made in the second Book of King Edward; more, probably, than many then liked, and more, certainly, than the sounder portion

of the Church of England in the reign of Elizabeth approved of, who, in the Book of Common Prayer then established, went back in some points to the First Book of King Edward. The then change, as far as it goes, shows what we should have been prepared to expect, that there was rather a reaction, than an inclination to go further and further, in the minds of judicious men at that period.

But (to recur to the former question) let us now look to the Articles themselves, and examine their character as bearing upon the supposed intentions of the Reformers. First then, is there to be observed in them on the whole a disposition to sink existing controversies, or the contrary; a disposition to leave matters undecided, or to decide them? Is there especially such a disposition in those points, to which Dr. Hampden's remarks, perhaps as the extreme case, seem to be chiefly directed; the Trinity, and the various heresies relating to that great and mysterious doctrine? Is it not upon the face of the Articles rather apparent, that those who drew them up endeavoured to do, what, as honest men, the teachers of others, and anxious to raise up landmarks for the weak and ignorant to walk by, they were surely bound to do? Do not the Articles denounce all the errors which then existed or were fairly developed? They are aimed not only against the Papist, but against Pelagians, Anabaptists, and even Zuinglians; they

pronounce definitely on the case of infant baptism, and the efficacy of that and the other sacrament; on those opinions, which have since been adopted and upheld by the Quakers, and in fact, on the other errors of the day. The great exception must doubtless be considered to be in their not asserting explicitly, the doctrine of the Apostolical succession; but it must be recollected, that the 24th and 35th, answering to the 23d and 36th of the Elizabethan Articles, if rightly interpreted, involve it; that Cranmer's[h] opinions seem to have been only gradually coming right upon this head, which accounts for even the others concerned not speaking more strongly upon it; and, lastly, that Presbyterianism was not then fully developed, and no one of any character had so much as thought of denying the importance of Episcopal ordination, where it was to be had. But, grant the utmost as to the laxity of the Articles on this or any point, and it would only prove, that the same laxity of opinion did not exist as to those points on which they *have* given a decisive opinion, on which they *have* dogmatized.

But we have in fact an additional testimony to the real sentiments of the Reformers, in a work, which *did* form one of their ulterior objects; and which we may therefore conclude to be at least as much in furtherance of their views, as any thing

[h] See Preface to Cranmer, p. xxxii.—xxxiv.

that has been imputed to them; I mean, in the Reformation of the Ecclesiastical Code, which only Edward's death prevented from being carried into effect. Now, not to say, that *any* ecclesiastical code, as involving ecclesiastical censures and punishments, seems to make somewhat against Dr. Hampden; that which was intended has a distinct chapter on the subject of heresy, in which it pronounces as heretics those who deny the divine or human nature of CHRIST; who think his human nature absorbed into his divine after the ascension; who deny the Godhead of the HOLY GHOST; the Pelagians; the Anabaptists; those who hold the Sacraments to be naked signs; who maintain the intermediate state to be one of sleep, or annihilation, &c. &c. adding, that these errors only have been mentioned out of many others, as being the errors which then existed. The method to be adopted in enquiring into, and punishing, such cases is then described. As to the latter, to speak from what appears on the surface, Burnet seems to be right and Collier wrong, where the former asserts, that there was so far an improvement upon what has been seen above to be the practice of the Reformers, that there was to have been no capital punishment for heretics in the new Code[1]. But there is little

[1] It is true, indeed, heretics are to be ultimately handed over to the civil magistrate, which may mean, to be, in some cases, capitally punished.

evidence of what is called liberality of sentiment towards speculative error, on the part of those who direct that a convicted or avowed heretic is to be thenceforth considered infamous; to be denied the power of making a will; of serving in any public office; of being witness in a court of justice; or of suing any one in law[k]. In the case of Ministers it is provided, that, even on recanting, they should not be restored to their posts, or only at the discretion of the Ecclesiastical judge; and never, (except in a case of such urgent necessity as to supersede all general legislation,) to be subsequently promoted to a higher dignity than they had previously held[l].

It may be asked again, therefore, were these legislators likely to favour the ulterior measures of the writer on Religious Dissent? and does it not, which is important, appear also from this code of laws alone, that the Articles were not intended as a confession of faith for the Clergy only, since laymen too were to be punished for controverting them[m]?

It has been well shown in the notes to a late very elaborate pamphlet, entitled "Subscription no Bondage," what were the views of those, who first imposed Subscription to the Articles upon the

[k] All actions in the mean time lying against himself.

[l] For the whole of these statements, see the book itself, which is entitled Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum.

[m] I say *them*, because there is an evident parallelism between the 42 Articles, and the intended Ecclesiastical Code.

Universities. It will be satisfactory doubtless to find, that Cranmer himself had an eye to the religious education of the Universities, at the same time that he was taking measures about drawing up the Articles. This perhaps may appear from the following passage, which I find given in the notes to Cranmer's Remains, (vol. i. p. 332.) as Archbishop Parker's views of Cranmer's attentions to the continental divines.

"Cranmerus Archiepiscopus, ut evangelicam doctrinam in Cantabrigiensi atque Oxoniensi Academiis, e quibus ad totius regni institutionem doctores infiniti prodeunt, firmaret, celeberrimos theologos ab exteris nationibus in Angliam accersivit."

Whence it seems that it was part of the same system to draw up a Confession of faith, and to introduce the doctrines it contained into the University, not as a mere test, but as a form of sound doctrine; and Cranmer would probably have done shortly, what Whitgift did.

It is not unimportant to show further, that the original Articles were not intended as a temporary form to meet prejudices only half swept away, and on the other hand that neither Cranmer nor Melancthon (on whose opinions Cranmer much leant) would have sanctioned any mode of settling controversies by the use of generalities. Now Melancthon, it seems, had said of such a method as adopted by Charles V. "cothurnos facit, qui novas discor-

dias excitabunt;" and Cranmer, in his Letters to John Alasco, and to Albert Hardenberg, (Nos. 272 and 273 in the Remains,) writes thus;

"Cupimus veram doctrinam proponere, nec volumus cothurnos facere aut ambiguitatibus ludere; sed, semotâ omni prudentiâ carnis, veram, perspicuam, sacrarum literarum normæ convenientem doctrinæ formam ad posteros transmittere, ut et apud omnes gentes extet illustre testimonium de doctrinâ nostrâ, gravi doctorum et piorum auctoritate traditum, et universa posteritas normam habeat quam sequatur."

It has been already, I hope, shown, both that the Articles of 1552 were this concerted form of doctrine, and that they did attempt to give this sound view of Christian faith; the object being not only, ut "doctrinæ controversias toll*erent*," but also, ut "integrum corpus veræ doctrinæ extru*erent*." (See the same letters.) And what forbids that this same view should be the view with which these Articles should be subsequently imposed upon the University? And is it not a mere assumption to say, that that imposition was a mere *test*, the object being to exclude Papists, and not connected with the setting up in the University a sounder form of doctrine? or why was it *then* wished (for surely to put it upon the low political ground alone, is not enough) to exclude Papists, and why should it *now* be considered desirable to exclude Dissenters, but on the ground that their admission must tend to introduce a looser

system of religious education into the University, and an indifference to religious differences amongst those who are the objects of it. Grant it to be ever so much a test, and its purpose exclusion, it does not in the least follow, that religious education is not the sole meaning and drift of having such a test, of aiming at such exclusion.

But to return. What if after all it should be allowed that the formularies of the sixteenth century need not be regarded *in themselves* as absolutely unalterable, nay, that it is possible the Reformers themselves might have been disposed not to regard them as such; does it therefore follow that such alterations must needs be guided by the one motive of comprehending such as are disposed to differ from us; must have for their object and tendency the getting rid of such doctrinal statements, as had been already put forward, as containing too much of the dogmatism of the Scholastic theology? Is it not, to say the least, extremely probable, that defences would have been added rather than taken away? If the doctrinal statements in the Articles are false, then let them be withdrawn—but the Reformers at least did not think so, or they would scarcely have put them forth. If they are unnecessary, then too they *might* be withdrawn; but yet, (as it is obvious that there can even then be no *necessity* for withdrawing them; that if they do no good they can do no harm; that, since the human mind is prone to return into its old channels, to tenant anew

the deserted forms of ancient opinions, it is at least safe to keep up the bulwarks we have raised against them; that, lastly, it is possible, not to say probable, that there *may* be a connection between the existence of such bulwarks, and the decay of such opinions,) they may surely as well be left. But, thirdly, they may be insufficient, and then indeed it might be well to alter, or rather to add somewhat to them. And in this respect it is possible enough that something ought to be done. How far the present state of things makes such an attempt feasible is another question, and if the writer on Dissent meant that the Reformers would have done this, it is plain it makes nothing for his purpose. "They did what they could," he says, "as *prudent* men." Might we not better say, They did what they could as *honest* men? They did their duty, that is, in raising up defences against those false views, (especially those of the Papists,) which had corrupted the "sincere milk of the word" up to that time; and if other adversaries had risen up, the Church would have once more put her armies in array, and "set up her banners for tokens" against her new assailants. Fresh protests would have been recorded, fresh denunciations have been thundered forth, fresh tests imposed, and as new heresies sprung forth, or old ones revived, they would have been brought before the tribunal of the Church, to be arraigned, condemned, and repressed. Thus had the plans of the Reformers been carried fully

into effect, our much-needed discipline would have been enforced, the offending limb would have been excommunicated, the ignorant member instructed and reclaimed, the docile confirmed and built up in the faith. But this view of the subject is much better set forth in two tracts[n], to be found in the first volume of Tracts for the Times, from which two or three extracts are subjoined; and which surely give a much better notion of what was left incomplete by the Reformers, and what, therefore, *they* might have been expected, and *we* ought, to do, than Dr. Hampden must intend to attribute to them, or recommend to us.

"I would do what our Reformers in the sixteenth century did: they did not touch the existing documents of doctrine—there was no occasion—they kept the Creeds as they were; but they *added* protests against the corruptions of faith, worship, and discipline, which had grown up round them. I would do the same thing now, if I could: I would not *change* the Articles, I would *add* to them: add protests against the erastianism and the latitudinarianism which have incrusted them. I would append to the Catechism a section on the power of the Church."

And, again, the following is put into the mouth of another person:

"I think I quite understand the ground you take. You consider that, as time goes on, fresh and fresh articles of faith are necessary to secure the Church's purity,

[n] Via Media, especially No. 2.

according to the rise of successive heresies and errors. These articles are all hidden, as it were, from the first, in the Church's bosom, and brought out into form according to the occasion. Such was the Nicene Confession against Arius; the English Articles against Popery: and such are those now called for in this Age of schism, to meet the new heresy, which denies the holy Catholic Church—the heresy of Hoadley, and others like him."

"I understand you further to say, that you hold to the Reformers as far as they have spoken out in our formularies, which at the same time you consider as incomplete; that the doctrines which are wanting in the Articles, such as the Apostolical Commission, are the doctrines of the Catholic Church; doctrines which a member of that Church holds *as such* prior to Subscription; that, moreover, they are quite consistent with our Articles, sometimes even implied in them, and sometimes clearly contained in the Liturgy, though not in the Articles, as the Apostolical Commission in the Ordination Service; lastly, that we are clearly bound to believe, and all of us do believe, as essential, doctrines which nevertheless are not contained in the Articles, as e. g. the inspiration of Holy Scripture."

If, as the writer proceeds to show, the Liturgy embodies such views, though the Articles do not, and the Reformers are the framers in nearly its present shape of the former as well as of the latter, the clear inference surely is, not that in the Articles they *did* sink many points, and would now have sunk more, but that they *did* speak out on many points, and would now have spoken out on

more; that they laid down in a systematic form the doctrines of the Church, where they conceived it to be most necessary, and only did not meet a necessity, which they did not foresee.

NOTE.

Dr. Hampden in his pamphlet, p. 8, 9. with the view of afterwards establishing his principle, that " no conclusions of human reasoning, however correctly deduced, however logically sound, are properly religious truths; are such as strictly and necessarily belong to human salvation through Christ;" has proceeded to notice the very natural objection, " what then becomes of that rule of theological interpretation, that nothing is to be received as an article of faith, but what may be read in Scripture, or may be proved thereby;" the latter part of which, it may be urged, is thus rendered a dead letter. His answer amounts to this, that what cannot be proved by Scripture is not truth of revelation, but that it by no means follows, that what can be proved by it, is therefore truth of revelation. Now, of course, no one means to say, that every thing that can be proved out of Scripture, is necessary to salvation; because to those who believe that, if we knew how to set about it, all truth might be proved out of Scripture, it would follow, that all truth was necessary to salvation, and consequently that no man can be saved; (since no one in his senses would say that any man holds all truth;) but if truth of revelation means truth at all, surely every thing that can be *legitimately* proved from Scripture *is* true. But besides, even if it were not so, how is the objection met? The sixth Article, indeed, does not explicitly state that any article of faith that can be proved by Scripture is necessary to salvation, nor, be

it observed, that any, that is read therein, is so either; but it evidently means that some are so, both of the one sort, and of the other. And no answer whatever is given by such a reply to the obvious meaning of the objection, Why did the Reformers put in the latter clause? Why did they, if, as I do not feel sure the writer did not mean to hint, (and which is the reason that part of the pamphlet is here noticed,) they agreed in his principle, that nothing to be proved from Scripture is a religious truth in the proper sense of the word? Why did not the Article run, "so that whatsoever is not read therein, is not to be required, &c." which would be more consistent with Dr. Hampden's views. It will scarcely be thought that they were put in either to sound well, or with a view to deceive, and because, though they imply that his principle is unsound, they do not explicitly assert it. It remains therefore that they were inserted both because they imply it, and because the framers believed that which was implied.

THE END.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

A

LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HON. THE LORD NORTH,

CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

CONCERNING

SUBSCRIPTION TO THE XXXIX ARTICLES,

AND PARTICULARLY

THE UNDERGRADUATE SUBSCRIPTION

IN

THE UNIVERSITY.

BY A MEMBER OF CONVOCATION,

(Generally supposed to be GEORGE HORNE, D.D. the learned President of Magdalen College.)

WITH A PREFACE AND NOTES BY THE EDITOR.

OXFORD,

PRINTED BY W. BAXTER;

SOLD BY J. PARKER; AND MESSRS. RIVINGTON, AND ROAKE AND VARTEY,

LONDON.

1834.

PREFACE.

THIS Letter to Lord North must not be confounded with another, addressed to the same noble Lord in 1772, upon the general subject of Clerical Subscription, the principles of which, like those of all the other Letters and Discourses on the anti-subscription side of the question, are Arian or Socinian. The present Letter has been assigned to the good temper, cultivated talents, and polished style, of George Horne, D.D. the late pious and learned President of Magdalen College, and Bishop of Norwich. Though it be not printed with his Works, and though there can be found no acknowledgments that it came from his pen, Middleton, in his Decads, p. 320, attributes it to Dr. Horne, and the internal evidence confirms that attribution. The allusions to Priestley are in perfect keeping with Dr. Horne's known Letters to that very able and scientific unbeliever. The topics, style, and temper of the Letter are all in unison with those of his known and acknowledged pamphlets; and so strong and clear have these evidences appeared to the Editor, that

he has had no hesitation in following Middleton, and in ascribing it to the late President of Magdalen College.

Perhaps enough may have been already said, to satisfy duties merely editorial; but the controversies which have been revived of late upon the subject of Subscription to the Articles seem, if not to impose the duty, at least to suggest the usefulness, of entering upon a review of those which occupied the attention of the Church and nation about sixty years ago. The review must be cursory and general; but it may serve to connect the present with the former questions upon the same subjects; for the polemics of the present day are but travelling over again the beaten paths of by-gone discussions, and perhaps with knowledge and abilities inferior to those which were possessed by their predecessors in the argument.

If these *Subscription-controversies* were surveyed in their earliest history, they would be found to be coeval with the times which witnessed the accusations of Cartwright and Travers, and the answers of Whitgift and Hooker. Such a retrospect would also embrace the whole of those necessary protective and defensive measures, which, originating in the prudence and fortitude of Archbishops Parker and Whitgift, were pursued with the same firm and discreet resolution during the Primacy of Archbishop Bancroft, and

ultimately led to that most salutary ordinance, which required the test of a subscription to the three Articles of the thirty-sixth Canon, as an evidence of conformity to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church of England, and as a qualification for orders and offices in that Church, and for Degrees at the Universities.

But for the purpose of setting forth the affinities of the present pamphlet, it will not be necessary to enter upon so remote a period; neither will it be necessary to dwell upon those later questions concerning the *right sense of Subscription*, in 1712 and afterwards, which, though they differed from the former in principle and purpose, caused new distractions in the Church, but by calling forth the energies of a Waterland, essentially served the cause of truth, and led to the demonstration, that it was not lawful *to subscribe the Articles in an Arian sense*. Though the struggles of the Arian, upon this occasion, differed from those of the Puritan, in every way that men's motives and conduct can be compared, they both agreed in the determination to resist, and if possible to get rid of, Subscription to articulate statements of religious opinion. It is, however, to be observed, that these latter controversies turned altogether upon Trinitarian, not Disciplinarian or Calvinistic, points; and farther, that the objections of Whitby, Whiston, and Clarke were the forerun-

ners and preparers of the way for those more formidable assaults, which were afterwards made by Blackburne, Jebb, Lindsey, Disney, Evanson, and the *Fratres Poloni* of the Feathers' Tavern.

If, for the illustration of this tract, its connection be sought with the discussions of the times in which it was written, and with the causes and occasions of those discussions, it will be necessary to refer to that inauspicious volume, which is said to have produced eighty controversial pamphlets, between 1766 and 1772, *the Confessional* of Francis Blackburne, M.A. Archdeacon of Cleveland. With the same view it will be necessary to revert to the association of the two hundred and fifty Clergymen and Laymen at the Feathers' Tavern in the Strand, which may be said to have grown out of the doctrines of *the Confessional*, and which petitioned Parliament on the 6th of February, 1772, for relief from all subscriptions to all articles of religious doctrine and discipline. Reference must be also made to the motion of Sir William Meredith, on presenting that petition to Parliament, and to the other motion made by the same Baronet in February of the following year, to relieve the Undergraduate Academics of Oxford from their Subscriptions, upon the special grounds of their extreme youth, their ignorance of the Articles, their incompetency to understand them, and their alleged want of instruction upon those subjects.

It may be here observed, that during the two disputatious years, 1772, 1773, controversies were going on upon the subject of Subscriptions both among the Clergy and among dissenting ministers; (for, according to the Toleration Act as it then stood, dissenting teachers were obliged to subscribe all the Articles but the 34th, 35th, 36th, and the first clause of the 20th.) There were controversies also concerning lay as well as clerical Subscription; controversies upon Academic Subscriptions, as they were required at Oxford, and as they were required at Cambridge; in short, it seemed as if, by common consent, a truce had taken place between dissidents upon all other matters, that their energies might be concentrated, and exclusively directed to the question about Subscriptions: and sermon upon sermon, charge upon charge, argument upon argument, were published by the apologists of the Church in proof and support of the reasonableness, the expediency, the necessity, the duty, the scriptural warranties, the primitive practice of subscriptions to articles of faith. And if from so great a number and variety of powerful arguments, a selection were made of those which were read and referred to, at the time of their publication, as works of the greatest interest and ability, a Volume of Tracts on Clerical Subscription might be formed, of very considerable literary merit, and manifest utility.

Neither was the controversy upon the special subject of ACADEMIC Subscriptions less vigorous in its growth, or less abundant in its produce; and if the same course were pursued in selecting able arguments upon and in defence of Graduate and Undergraduate Subscriptions at the Universities, a second Volume of Tracts might be formed, which, though not decorated in every instance with the authors' names, (for these writings were very often published without them,) would furnish in the present day a large and salutary supply of sound opinions, exact information, and conclusive reasonings, upon these subjects. A selection of this sort was actually made, and published, in 1772, entitled, "*A collection of papers, designed to explain and vindicate the present mode of Subscription required by the University of Oxford from all young persons at their Matriculation;*" and little more would be necessary, for the fulfilment of this part of the design, than to reprint what appears to have been very judiciously selected.

It is true, that Subscription at Matriculation is the only subject handled in the arguments of this collection; but that was the vertical point of the controversy as it had been carried on at Oxford, and as such, was very properly selected for special vindication and defence. It was *Undergraduate Subscription* which had most provoked the hostility of the Socinian, and had most abundantly

supplied the disciples of Blackburne with their topics of declamation. It was this which had been pressed upon the attention of the University before the death of Lord Lichfield, its Chancellor, (Sept. 17, 1772,) and was the first thing of moment which was proposed to its consideration after the installation of his successor, (Oct. 6, 1772.) It was this which had become the subject of universal and almost exclusive discussion in the University, having been thrice introduced into the House of Convocation in 1773; once in a proposition to substitute for Subscription at Matriculation, *a Declaration* of Conformity to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England; and twice afterwards, in propositions to append *an Epinomis*, or Explanation to the Matriculation Statute, which young students were to read, or to have read to them, at Matriculation. These are the reasons why the whole collection of the Oxford Tracts above referred to was devoted to this argument alone. The Academic questions about Subscription at Cambridge turned almost exclusively upon the practice of subscribing the three Articles of the 36th Canon, as a test of opinion and condition of Graduation upon taking Degrees; at Oxford the propriety of that requisition was never publicly controverted[a].

[a] So says the author of "Reflections on the Impropriety and Inexpediency of Lay-Subscription." P. 29. *I cannot but*

Reference having been thus made to the questions argued at Cambridge, in order to shew their great difference from the questions discussed at Oxford, it may be a fit opportunity to observe, that when Cambridge had substituted the declaration, "*I am bonâ fide a member of the Church of England as by law established,*" instead of a Subscription to the three Articles of the 36th Canon, upon taking a Degree, that University found, at the very first working of the substituted formulary, that they were just as far as ever from satisfying the cravings of Liberalism; the Infidels and Rationalists, at whose instance this concession had been made, thought the declaration as narrow and illiberal as the subscription, and, like the Arians of old, demanded some larger and more indefinite expression of religious, or rather irreligious, opinion. The Grace which proposed the substitution passed the Senate *June* 23, 1772; and six months afterwards, 17th *January*, 1773, Blackburne's own son, and probably at his father's suggestion, refused to make *the bonâ fide declaration*, tendering to the astonished Vice-Chancellor another in lieu of it; "*I, Thomas Blackburne, do hereby declare my full persuasion of the truth of the Christian Religion as exhibited in the Scriptures; and that I have hitherto*

observe, that our writers on the side of Subscription have confined themselves entirely to Matriculation.

communicated with the Established Church, and have no present intention of communicating with any other." This substitute for the Academic substitute was of course rejected, and Thomas Blackburne lost his B.A. degree, not, however, without the most copious discharges of abuse against the illiberality of Church-of-Englandism, and the intolerance of Cambridge. One of these Arian or Socinian railers, not without some humour, calls the *bonâ fide* substitute for Subscription, *idem Monachus sed alio cucullo indutus*. Priestley, Lindsey, Jebb, Blackburne, and the rest, combine their sarcasms to make it contemptible: one considers it a proof, "*that narrow-minded orthodoxy, equipped with brief authority, is loath to depart from its intrenchments;*" another calls it "*an Academic Shibboleth;*" another says of it, "*that the cause of religious despotism scarcely suffers from the change.*" It was reviled "*as an insidious substitution,*" a "*dexterous manœuvre,*" "*an alteration in form but not in spirit;*" and Blackburne, concentrating his bitterness, pronounces it to be "*a coup de maitre, which perhaps was never outdone by the most refined politician in an Italian conclave.*" In short, nothing appears to have been gained by this attempt to conciliate the Rationalists and Free-thinkers but greater bitterness of accusation and new forms of reproach; and if the ill-success of

this attempt at accommodation be duly weighed, and the increased resentment produced by it, they will not fail to produce the conviction, that nothing will satisfy the belligerent and rapacious theology of these Reformers, but the abrogation of all tests as to the *quid*, *quale*, and *quantum* of an Academic's religion.

But to return from this digression, the object and occasion of this Pamphlet will be still farther elucidated, if there be added, a short narrative of the transactions which took place in and out of Convocation during the years 1772, 1773. Such a narrative will not only shew the solicitude of the Academic body to give the subject the fullest and most serious consideration, but will also serve to prove the unshaken firmness of the University in maintaining its ancient discipline in all those particulars, which were deemed essential to *good and godly learning*, in other words, to the attainment of those ends which had been prescribed to the vigilance of the University, by its great Act or Charter of Incorporation, 13 Eliz.

The narrative, to follow the order of proceedings, should begin early in March, 1772, about six months before Lord Lichfield's death, when (and, as it has been said, at his request) the University appointed a delegacy of nine to examine records, and ascertain how far its power extended relative to changes or alterations in the

matter of Subscription. The same course, about the same time, had been adopted at Cambridge upon the recommendation of its Chancellor, the Duke of Grafton. A year afterwards, that is, about six months after Lord Lichfield's death, and about five months after the installation of his successor Lord North, a proposal was submitted to Convocation on the 4th of February, 1773, to substitute, as had been done at Cambridge in the case of Bachelors seven months before, *a declaration* of conformity to the worship and liturgy of the Church of England for a subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles at Matriculation. Some excellent speeches are said to have been made upon the occasion, but the House would not consent to any alteration; the proposed formulary itself did not even come into discussion, for the whole time and attention of Convocation were occupied upon previous questions, and matters relating to the principles of the proposed measure, and the powers of the Academic body.

In the following month, notice was sent to the Colleges, that a Convocation would be holden on Wednesday, the 3d day of March, 1773, at 12 o'clock, when it would be proposed to subjoin the following *Explanation* to the Statute *De tempore et conditionibus Matriculationis*, Tit. ii. §. 3. "Ad eximendum omnem scrupulum circa sensum hujus statuti, notandum hìc voluit Academia,

nihil aliud intendi per subscriptionem supradictam, quam ut ii, qui in Matriculam Universitatis redigendi accedunt, hâc subscriptione testantur, se esse de Ecclesiâ Anglicanâ, et nullam doctrinam tenere, quantum ipsi sciunt, contrariam doctrinis in eâdem receptis, necnon se fore conformes, quamdiu in Academiâ vixerint, cultui et liturgiæ istius Ecclesiæ prout ea nunc legibus est stabilita. Ne vero hoc Statutum, aut minus innotescat, aut perperam intelligatur, omnes scholares matriculandi hanc explicationem coram Vice-Cancellario legere, vel lectam audire tenentur." No sooner had the proposed *Explanation*, or *Epinomis*, been brought to the knowledge of Members of Convocation by the Vice-Chancellor's notices, than some queries were drawn up, and presented to his consideration. "1. Whether there is any real difference between the late proposal of repealing this Statute and the proposed method of explaining it? 2. Whether, supposing a difference . . . they are not both . . . expressly repugnant to Tit. x. §. 2? 3. Whether the present proposed Latin formulary is not the same in sense with the English one, that has already received the *negative* of a very great majority of Convocation? 4. Whether the Latinity is not such as, in the exercise of a boy at Westminster, would expose him to severe corporal correction?

5. Whether it is not unprecedented, and contrary to common justice, to propose again hastily, and, as far as appears, *mero motu*, a matter that has so recently received a solemn determination? 6. Whether, if it were thought expedient, that a matter of so much consequence should be re-considered, we ought not in such a case to follow the example of our superiors BY A CALL OF THE HOUSE AND TIMELY NOTICE, in order to take the sense of the whole University? 7. Whether the Vice-Chancellor is not, in his own conscience, convinced, THAT IF ALL THE COUNTRY CLERGYMEN WHO HAVE BEEN EDUCATED HERE HAD VOTES IN CONVOCATION, the matter would not be rejected fifty to one? 8. Whether this proposal will not bring discredit and disquietude to the author of it, and to the University? 9. Whether therefore the question ought not to be withdrawn, and notice given accordingly by advertisement in the public prints?"

These points of enquiry seem to have produced a postponement of the day originally fixed for holding a Convocation; instead of the 3d of March, as originally notified, it was held on the 18th. But before the question was put in the usual way, three members of the House spoke in succession against the legality of the whole proceeding. No attempt was made to vindicate it from the charge, and the Vice-Chan-

cellor, perhaps to gain time to consider these unforeseen objections, dissolved Convocation without putting the question. The matter, however, did not end here; for the proposed *Epinomis* was again submitted to Convocation, Wednesday, March 30, 1773, when, after a long discussion, it was finally rejected by a very large majority.

Such are some of the facts, as collected from the Periodicals of the day, which the Editor has thought it useful to prefix to Dr. Horne's Letter. With respect to the argument itself, he shall leave it in the hands of the able Letter-writer; but with these observations: that the extreme youth of students at the time of their Matriculation can no longer be urged against Subscription; that the religious instruction which they now receive from their teachers, before they enter the University, is such as enables them to understand, and with suitable and sufficient knowledge to bear witness to, their belief of the doctrines of the Church of England, as set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles, and to give a promise of conformity to its discipline and worship; that before they are called upon to subscribe, their College Tutors ascertain, by interrogatory and otherwise, the suitableness and sufficiency of the knowledge which they have attained, in other words, their religious qualifications to give the required testimony as to their Church-member-

ship; and, lastly, it must be remembered, that many elementary books on the Thirty-nine Articles have been published, *in usum Juventutis Academicæ*, since those of Welchman and Veneer, and that these later works are admirably adapted to their purpose of conveying to the Student, in the shortest and simplest form, the knowledge necessary for the right understanding of the Thirty-nine Articles, and a conscientious Subscription to them.

In a late discussion in the House of Lords upon the subject of Undergraduate Subscription, it would perhaps have been better, if the Right Rev. and very able and eloquent vindicator of the Oxford Requisition had taken his ground upon some or all of these topics, instead of resting exclusively upon that which used to be called Archdeacon Powell's argument, (as having been introduced by that very orthodox as well as philosophic divine, at the close of his Discourse on Clerical Subscription at Cambridge, 1757;) namely, the argument *ex auctoritate*. As Dr. Powell's adversaries have so often sought to make him and his argument contemptible by piecemeal quotations of what he said, it is but an act of justice to subjoin the whole of it. "But many of those, who are called upon to subscribe, it is urged, have neither the age nor the learning necessary to make them competent

judges of such abstruse points; their weakness is imposed upon; they assent before they have examined. And without question these nice casuists could as easily have shewn the impiety of teaching children the Creed. A public confession of our faith, they might say, is a solemn thing; some parts of it they will not understand till after many years, some perhaps never. All this would be very true, but very trifling. Every one perceives, that a Creed in the mouths of children is not a testimony of their assent. On such subjects they are unable to speak either truth or falsehood: but from those who have advanced a little farther into life, a little more may be expected. They may acknowledge themselves members of the Church of *England;* and declare, that they have no objection to her Articles, but a belief of them grounded *on the authority of others.* And nothing farther, I suppose, does any man conceive to be meant by their subscriptions." Discourses on various subjects, by Wm. Samuel Powell, D.D. Archdeacon of Colchester, and Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, p. 40. ed. 1776.

It was not to be wondered at, that such an argument should have been scoffed at, upon the occasion alluded to, by him who seems to be an enemy to all authoritative instruction, whether it be given in the nursery, the school, the Univer-

sity, or the Church. In spite, however, of such mockery, it is asserted, that the argument *ex auctoritate* is a good one; that there is and ever must be an assent of faith, as well as an assent of knowledge; an assent of faith arising out of reliance upon the testimony of others; an assent of knowledge, produced by personal assurance of the truth of facts, or opinions after previous search and verification. There is nothing unreasonable in the principle, nor unusual in the practice, for individuals to declare their conscientious convictions in the truth of a thing or things affirmed, or of a thing or things denied, without being at the time of such declaration possessed of the proof, or series of proofs, whereby such affirmations or negations are to be established as truths. For these conscientious convictions may be obtained by other ways than personal acquaintance with proofs and evidences; for instance, from our trust in the known probity, approved knowledge, disinterested friendship, and unblemished character of him who informs or teaches us, it may be a parent, guardian, pastor, teacher, tutor, friend; and if the truths so told or taught be the same which holy men of old have signed with their hands and sealed with their blood, the same which the national Church has ever taught and continues to teach, and which the wisest

and the best of her sons receive, maintain, defend, these convictions may rise so high in the scale of intellectual and moral assurance, as to amount to full and entire assents or acquiescences of the mind, without any thing of popish subjection, either of the will or understanding; still are they no more than reliances upon testimony. They are all built upon authority; but then it is such an authority, as it would be injustice to suspect, and insanity to deny, founded as it is upon the natural relations of life, sanctioned by the express declarations of Scripture, and required by the manifest interests of society.

But though the argument from authority be so good in itself, and so appropriate upon this question, it must be repeated, that the more advanced age of most young men at the time of their Matriculation, and the more exact and extensive religious knowledge which they possess, and the fuller instruction which they have received from the schoolmaster, and the more searching enquiries made by the College tutor, before they are called upon to subscribe, when compared with what used to be the case in each of these particulars at the date of the old philippics against Undergraduate Subscription, all serve to shew, that there are a great many other important arguments, besides the *argumentum ex auc-*

toritate, whereby the practice of Oxford may be vindicated and commended.

The enemy can no longer insist, as he used to do, upon the deplorable ignorance of the subscribers, upon their childhood, as boys of 16, upon their total want not only of all knowledge of the Articles of religion, but of all the necessary means of obtaining it, upon the absence of all desire on the part of the Academic authorities, to urge the necessity of previous information, or facilitate the acquirement of it. These and similar imputations, not altogether true at any time, are positively false and calumnious in the present day. Undergraduate Subscription, according to the present practice, is agreeable to Reason and Scripture, conducive to sound speech and opinion in respect of the great fundamental truths of Christianity, serviceable as the means of effecting an union between true religion and useful learning, subsidiary to moral and religious improvement, and powerfully promotes peace and harmony among those who, having entered into the same covenant by *one baptism*, ought to hold *one faith*, worship *one Lord*, and *walk unto the house of God in company*.

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A

LETTER

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE LORD NORTH,

&c.

MY LORD,

I AM a Member of Convocation in the University of Oxford, and, though solicited by a friend for another Candidate, and by no one for you, took a considerable journey, for the purpose of giving you such a testimony of my approbation, as the occasion offered. This is not said with any view of paying court to your Lordship. You will never know, or see, or hear of, the person who now addresses you. The motive of my journey was to pay you a small part of my share of the nation's gratitude, for your spirited and successful application of your great abilities to the controlling of the dangerous tumults of a

profligate faction, and for your steadiness in fixing, and retaining upon the most detestable of all men living, that brand of infamy which he so righteously had deserved.

But, My Lord, civil merit is not all that I am willing to attribute to you. I wish to compare you, throughout, with the most upright, orthodox, religious Minister that ever reverenced and upheld Monarchy, and its surest support the Church of England. Your Lordship sees that I mean the great Earl of Clarendon. He perceived, and convinced his master of the dangerous consequences of believing the strongest professions of the Presbyterians, (whose faction, he tells us, is their religion,) and of making them the smallest concessions. And the effect of those large ones that have been indulged them since his time—the insolence with which they have unmasked themselves to let us know, that, with all their Hoadleian cant of setting up Christ and his Gospel as the only head and code of his Church, they are no better than determined enemies to both—affords the most illustrious testimony of the penetrating sagacity of that great statesman.

Their efforts have all along been aiming at the subversion of Establishments, and the removing of Creeds and Articles: the plain consequence of

which would be, that as many Creeds and systems of Articles would arise among us, as there are men who pretend to speculate* the holy Scriptures. For should no form of sound words, no *ὑποτύπωσις τῶν λόγων ὑγιαινόντων*, be proposed to the faith of the members of a Christian Church, an assembly of lions, wolves, and tigers could not be more furious and disorderly than such a Church would be. Its members could be expected to agree in nothing properly Christian, except in the name, I mean the systems of letters that compose the name of Jesus Christ. His nature, his errand, his doctrines would be interpreted and taught with a fatal variety, even against the plainest evidence of scope, context, expression, and parallel passages of Scripture. And what would become of the *truth*, which, according to our Redeemer's account, can only *set us free* from sin and destruction, and which is essentially confined to one single precision, amidst so wild an uproar of jarrings and contradictions?

But where, after all, is this *truth* to be found? And is a civil society sure to find it, because it has the power to establish for its members a set

* speculate *upon* the holy Scriptures. EDIT.

of religious principles, and a mode of worship? The answer is, that if such a society enquire after the truth with a sufficiently reverential attention to that everlasting Gospel, where it resides, and with a due application to God for the guidance of his holy Spirit in the important task; it has the greatest reason to hope for success. At all events, that state that would be thought to profess Christianity, seems to be under a necessity of establishing *some* profession of faith, *some* mode of worship, and of protecting and encouraging those who follow and embrace them, to the utter discouragement of all who reject them. If, when convinced itself of the truth and rectitude of this profession and mode, it suffer the teachers of those who dissent[a] from them to neglect such

[a] This was the principle upon which the Toleration Act was drawn up in 1689, in favour of Dissenters; it made a distinction between the essentials and non-essentials of the Christian Religion, between the doctrinal and disciplinarian Articles of the Church of England; and whilst it relieved dissenting teachers from the necessity of subscribing to the 34th Article "of the Traditions of the Church," 35th "of the Homilies," 36th "of the Consecration of Bishops and Ministers," and the first clause of the 20th "of the Authority of the Church," it made it obligatory upon those teachers to subscribe to the others as necessary Articles of Christian faith and doctrine. In process of time, these requi-

parts of the former as do not seem strictly essential to the being of Christianity, and to frame a form of worship, or to reject all forms as they think fit, it acts with a moderation that ought to satisfy, and even gratify, the recusants. But if it extend its indulgence so far as to suffer its Articles of Religion and its form of worship to be unreservedly vilified, and treated, daily and hourly, with the grossest abuses, and even charged with blasphemy; and such doctrines to be openly avowed as, according to its own faith, are no better than downright blasphemies; it then exceeds the bounds of moderation, and falls into that extreme of semperlenity* and unconcern for the honour of our God and Saviour, which forebode the downfal of that Religion, which it has, on the most convincing reasons, espoused.

I cannot, My Lord, forbear to say, that this is the very state and condition of our established

sitions were almost universally neglected, so that before they were repealed, they had become obsolete enactments. The orthodox dissenting congregations generally complained of this neglect on the part of their ministers, attributing the growth of Socinianism and Arianism among them to the looseness of their ministers' opinions on fundamental points, and to their non-subscription. EDIT.

* for semperlenity, read *super*lenity. EDIT.

Religion at present. It is become the public subject of daily, blasphemous invective. And therefore, as the tumultuous licence of the times puts all legal punishment out of the question; the only method left us to secure our religious Establishment, if indeed we are anxious to secure it, is to exert our warmest zeal in defending its principles, and not to suffer the plausible suggestions of its adversaries to make the least successful advance towards overturning it.

No one is ignorant, that the infidel spirit of the times, joined to the fatal indifference seen in many of those on whose zeal for our religious constitution its safety entirely depends, have of late given encouragement to many insolent efforts of its avowed enemies.

To the lasting disgrace of this age, a body of our Clergy, smaller, one would hope, in number[b]

[b] The number was represented to be 250, but some of the associated (as their Petition represents) were of the profession of Civil Law and Physic. They met for the first time at the Feathers' tavern, Strand, July 17, 1771. At their second meeting, September 25, they agreed to petition Parliament. At their third meeting, December 11, they settled a circular to explain the objects of the Association. It was drawn up by Mr., afterwards Dr. Jebb, M.D. of Peter-house. And at their last meeting, January 23, 1772, it was resolved "to present their Petition to the

than they have been represented, have presumed to petition the Legislature to set free all the Clergy, for the time to come, from those solemn obligations into which they had, themselves, voluntarily entered, and to leave the Church of England destitute, for the future, of any marks or characters whereby it may be distinguished from a den of thieves. The Dissenters, at the

House of Commons as early as possible that session." It was so presented by Sir William Meredith, February 6, 1772. But the anti-subscriptionists were not unanimous. Some who embarked in this cause, such as Watson, Paley, Wollaston, were observed afterwards to secede from these ultra-proceedings, urging the propriety of submitting their complaints to the Episcopal Bench. Those who were of this opinion, (among whom we find the name of Porteus,) met at Archbishop Tennison's library, refusing to hold any intercourse with the Feathers-men, who in their turn refused to speak of the seceders in terms of common civility, denouncing them as " Apostate Whigs." This merciless denomination seems to have stung Watson, who thereupon wrote his two letters, (the last to Sir George Savile,) under the signature of " the Christian Whig." The result of the application to the Bishops is reported by Bp. Porteus. See Hodgson's Life of Porteus, p. 35. Archbishop Cornwallis in the name of his brethren replied, Feb. 11, 1773. " I have consulted severally my brethren, the Bishops, and it is the opinion of the Bench in general, that nothing can in prudence be done in the matter that has been submitted to their consideration." EDIT.

same time, have ridiculously been pleading, (like the poor Frenchman, who, when arrested for a just debt, told the officer "he would have nothing to do with the law,") that since they have always remonstrated against the Articles of the Church of England, they ought not to be subject to any subscription to them[c]. As if the Legislature had not evidently, and as if it were not their wisdom to exert, a right of prescribing the condition on which they, who undertake to instruct her subjects in Religion, shall be admitted to that office.

[c] There were great differences of opinion among the Dissenters, upon the propriety of altering the Toleration Act in this particular of Subscription to the doctrinal Articles of the Church of England. When in the year 1773, Parliament, upon petitions from Dissenters, took it into consideration, counter-petitions were also presented; the orthodox Dissenters were generally in favour of the Subscription required of their teachers under the Toleration Act, namely, a Subscription to all the fundamental verities of the Gospel, and especially the Trinitarian verities; and so peremptory were some of the orthodox Dissenters against those of the Free-thinking, Arian, and Socinian class, that they insisted upon being heard by counsel against this pretended measure of relief. Mr., afterwards Sir W. Chambers, the Vinerian Professor, was accordingly heard as counsel on their behalf at the bar of the House. The measure was, however, carried in the House of Commons by a majority of 65 to 14. But it was lost in the House of Lords by a majority of 102 to 29. EDIT.

As modestly might a tribe of Indian priests pray to be licensed to set up schools and churches in England; and plead, at the same time, that, as they declare against the principles of Christianity, it will be but reasonable to permit them to preach their own heathen doctrines without control.

Nor is this parallel exaggerated. Experience has shewn us, that the general connivance which has been indulged to the Dissenters with regard to that part of the Articles[d] to which the law requires their subscription, has been attended with the most pernicious consequences.

[d] The author alludes to the great growth of Arian and Socinian doctrines which took place among the Dissenters, and which greatly alarmed and distressed the non-conformists of the old school. When they saw such men as Kippis, Lardner, Leland, and even Watts, shaken in the firmness of their belief in some of the most important of the Trinitarian truths, the dissenting congregations began to fear, that they should have no security for the soundness of their ministers' faith, if they were released from their obligation to subscribe the doctrinal Articles of the Church of England. The discussion upon the subject at Salters' Hall, London, and also at Exeter, are full of interest, not only by reason of the ability shewn, and the soundness of the arguments for the necessity of believing in the Trinitarian mysteries, but specially because they prove the agreement of the orthodox among Churchmen and Dissenters, in their religious convictions upon these foundation truths of Christianity. EDIT.

Every dissenting teacher, however he cries out against established systems, hath a system of his own conceits, which he vends to his audience, as the dictates of the Gospel; though, for the most part, they are total negations of all its essential, fundamental doctrines. And let any one read the horrid effusions of the pragmatical Coryphæus[c] of the present race of Dissenters, relating to Christianity, and he will think it want of charity to suppose, that the wretch could possibly have poured forth so much blasphemy, if he had lain, as he ought by the requisition of the law to have lain, under the restraint of a subscription to our Articles. It is said, he has now got a better trade in his hands than that of blaspheming; and the best thanks of every Christian are eminently due to the noble Lord, who, no doubt with a pious

[c] Dr. Priestley. The steps from latitudinarianism to infidelity have been gradual, but progressive. John Hales, Chillingworth, Fowler, Whitby, Whiston, Clarke, Hoadley, Blackburne, Law, Jebb, Lindsey, present examples of this gradual degeneracy, or rather degradation, of religious opinion. Among the Dissenters there were found the like progressive deteriorations, of faith and doctrine, till at last, the whole body of Presbyterians became so corrupted by heretical pravity, that they now (with few exceptions) present the painful picture of a great revolt, not simply from the Articles, Directory, and Catechism of the Westminster Assembly, but from all the saving and sanctifying truths of the Gospel. EDIT.

intention, has found a more innocent employment for this busy infidel, than that of reviling the Religion brought down from heaven by the Son of God.

But of all the attacks that have been made upon our ecclesiastical constitution, (which though now abused by its bitter enemies with impunity, and deserted by its pretended friends, was, in better times, held forth as approaching, nearer than all others, to the apostolical model,) none is more alarming than that which immediately relates to our Universities.

These illustrious seats of learning, were originally constructed with a view to their being seminaries for the profession of true Religions also. Most of the Colleges were founded by ecclesiastical persons, who, as well as the lay founders, have generally required the members of their several societies to be trained up for instructors in religious principles, and, in due time, to take upon them holy Orders. And this purpose hath, as it ought, been all along piously attended to. Every member of the University, even he who hath attained his fifteenth year, is considered by the wisdom of our ancestors as a religious person, and is required solemnly to adopt and profess the principles of the Church of England, as contained in the Thirty-nine Articles.

And, My Lord, are not these Articles supposed to exhibit the principles of every one who professes himself a member of the Church of England? And though it seems impossible to obtain the like subscription from those members of the Church who live at large, and belong to no particular society; are they not all equally bound to acknowledge these doctrines? And would not the abolishing this subscription, where it has been solemnly established, and unimpeachedly practised, ever since the year 1581[f]; would not, I say,

[f] Before 1581, it was not thought necessary to give any instructions to the University about Subscription; but positive separation from the Church of England had now shewn itself for the first time since its settlement, in the instance of the Brownists, and all the elements of religious discord were at work. Lord Leicester was Chancellor of Oxford at this time. When Whitgift became Archbishop in 1583, the Queen charged him to "restore the discipline of the Church, and the Uniformity established by law, which had been deranged by the connivance of some prelates, (Archbishop Grindal *inter alios*,) the obstinacy of the Puritans, and the power of some noblemen." Subscription at the University was a tutelary and defensive measure: it was to save the inexperienced and unprepared from the insidious and subtle assaults of the disciplinarians and the other enemies of the Church of England, who though they had unmasked their malignity ten or twelve years before, had now assumed that attitude of hostility, which they never ceased to maintain, till

this abolition look like an express, formal release from all obligation of assent to these doctrines? Would it not seem a tacit signification to our youth, that they are at liberty to think of Religion as they please, and as whim and fancy, their own or that of others, may lead them? "Your predecessors in this place have been required to declare for these doctrines of this Church in which you have been baptized and catechised. They were put under a necessity of subscribing to certain Articles, exhibiting, as we, indeed, profess to believe, the genuine doctrines of the Gospel; agreed upon in the year 1562, and enjoined to be received in the Church of England, as the only means *for avoiding diversities of opinion, and for the establishing of consent touching true Religion.* But your present governors in the University and in the State have discovered they had overthrown the Church in 1645, and with it all the ancient and characteristic institutions of the country. Lord Leicester's application to Convocation stands upon the Convocation Register, thus: "Anno Domini 1581, secundo Novembris in celebri Convocatione Magistrorum Regentium et Non-Regentium habita, lectæ erant literæ ab insignissime Comite Leycestriæ, Cancellario nostro ad venerabilem Convocationem hoc exemplo subscriptæ." It should be also borne in mind, that Nonconformity had been making progress in Oxford since the days of Humphreys, Rainolds, and Sampson.
EDIT.

this to be all a wrong measure. It is now determined to be inexpedient and even absurd (though we have not *yet* forbidden *catechising*) to prepossess young minds in favour of *any* religious principles. You are now to be left to judge for yourselves, or, if you choose it, not to think at all about them; (for your tutor's lectures, if he shall choose to lecture you, in the Articles, will not oblige you to assent to them;) nor, unless you shall happen hereafter to take Degrees in the University, will we suppose you to be members of our Church, or more than Christians at large, without any determinate Christian principles. Do as you please with your religious sentiments. Hearken, without reproach of conscience, as you happen to be disposed, either to Socinians, Arians, Papists, Presbyterians, Quakers, or Anabaptists. Unless you stay amongst us to a Degree, you are at liberty, from any restraint on our part, to enlist yourselves under any of their banners. You are also free to declare yourselves members of the Church of England; but we, however the University was originally established as a religious nursery, and however it exists now in that capacity with regard to our national Church, we, to let the world see our attachment to religious liberty, will not say one word, nor do

one act, to induce you to choose the principles of this Church, preferable to any other principles." Such is the language in which the governors of the University must be supposed to address their novices, as soon as the statute shall be abolished requiring their subscription to the *Articles*. And though I will not deny that the harangue is founded upon the principles of what Hoadley taught us to call *religious liberty*, I will venture to say, it has not the least tincture of *Religion* in it. It has, till now, been the opinion of all who are in earnest about Religion, that it cannot too early be inculcated into young minds; and the catechising children hath for this reason uniformly been the practice of the Christian Church; and of this Church in particular, till the itch, now pretty well appeased, of hearing trim afternoon essays, miscalled lectures, entirely supplanted it in the metropolis. Is a child more capable of comprehending the grounds of the doctrines of the Catechism, than a youth of fifteen is capable of judging of the foundations upon which the doctrines of the Articles are constructed? And yet the child, without any prohibition from the governors of our Church, is permitted to be taught this formulary, almost as soon as he can lisp it out: and in spite of the principles of

religious liberty opposed to this practice, the design of it seems yet to be, that the child may be habituated to think favourably of the doctrines of our Church, before other principles and notions may be offered to him to divert him into the destructive paths of heresy, or schism, or infidelity. It is then, it seems, allowable to give children this prepossession, while they are children; but then, when they come to the University, this childish prepossession must be removed. All principles of Religion must, by an academical act, be removed out of their way, and the doctrines, contained alike in the Catechism and the Articles, are to be declared unnecessary to be professed any longer. If this were not intended by the alteration proposed, where would be the harm of addressing such young men as are to be matriculated, after reading the Thirty-nine Articles with them, in the following style:

"You are now about to become a member of a religious society, the chief seminary of the Church of England. This Church, of which you have been a member from your baptism, has, upon a diligent perusal of the holy Scriptures, drawn from thence a set of Articles, containing the fundamental doctrines expressed or implied in those Scriptures, and declaring against some

notorious errors, chiefly of the Church of Rome, which stand in plain opposition to the Gospel, and to the doctrine and practice of the primitive Church in its highest antiquity. The wisdom of our predecessors who compiled these Statutes, thought it expedient that some sort of declaration should be made by all members of the University at their Matriculation, that they profess themselves members of the Church of England, for whose honour and support its whole structure is calculated. What more natural profession hereof can be made, than that of subscribing your name to the abovementioned doctrines, as a token that you believe, from the authority of Scripture concerning the most important of them, from the reverence with which they have always been received by wiser folks than yourselves, and from the general acknowledgment of the truth of the bulk of them till lately[g], even among the Dissenters, (whose teachers are obliged by law to subscribe to all but a small part of them,) that they are faithfully drawn from the holy Scriptures, and that they reasonably oppose certain doctrines censured in them, as evidently contrary to the word of God."

[g] As the law then stood, the Dissenting ministers were wont to say, that they subscribed to 35 Articles and a half.

Such a requisition as this would have met with no reprehension, in times when scepticism, and its offspring, infidelity, had not arrogantly brought every religious subject under discussion, beginning at God, and running on through all his words and works. But the times are changed. Our forefathers were a generation of weak and credulous men: what was highly esteemed among them, is abomination in the sight of their wiser descendants. We are so sure that they were in the wrong, since the illumination which the Church, the State, and the University received from the *Confessional*[h], that we are taking hasty strides towards the total abolition of those Articles, which were formerly esteemed the *decus columenque* of all three. For it cannot be imagined, that the spectre, which has put our governors in so terrible a fright, will haunt us no more, after the present point is gained. The ab-

[h] Blackburne's Confessional certainly produced very remarkable effects. It was an argument which could not fail to be popular, as it was addressed to that love of liberty which, under due control, had been the parent of so much good, by leading to the overthrow of civil and religious tyranny in 1688, but which, by running into dissoluteness of opinion and licentiousness of conduct, had previously produced the civil and religious tyranny of 1649. This book became the rallying point of all the freethinkers of the day. Edit.

surdity of Subscription, once established in one instance, will be urged with a zeal animated by success, in another instance. Arguments *equally forcible* will be urged against the subscription of Candidates for Graduatcy; and who knows, whether, at some period, under less watchful guardians than the Church is at present blest with, the example of the University of Oxford may not be alleged and admitted as an argument against all Subscription? that infidels, heretics, and schismatics of all denominations, of all opinions, may verify in this nation, what David so anxiously dreaded for his own; that they who have all along, almost ever since Calvin spawned the motley race, been saying, louder than in their hearts, "Come, and let us root them out, that they be no more a people;" that they, "the tabernacles of the Edomites and the Ishmaelites, the Moabites and the Hagarenes, Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, the Philistines, with the Tyrians, Assur, and the children of Lot, may take the houses of God in possession."

The revolted two hundred and fifty[1] Church of England Clergy (if there were so many) believed

[1] Nothing was omitted on the part of the Feathers' Associ-

they failed of success in their petition for a total abolition of the Articles, from several obstacles which time may remove; a second, or third, or fourth attempt (for vermin are never weary of gnawing their passage through all obstacles) may prove successful. When the Universities, the seminaries of the Church, and the genuine repositories of true Religion as well as sound learning, shall have given up all, or even a part, of their wonted concern for securing the principles, and "for establishing the consent" of their members, "touching true religion," the reason will seem to have ceased for requiring any Subscriptions at all. "The young academics," it may be urged, "are, many of them, intended for holy Orders, and yet it is not thought ne-

ation to obtain success. An able committee; regular meetings; papers skilfully drawn up; petitions true to the doctrines of the Confessional; a strong party both in and out of the House of Commons; all seemed to indicate a successful result. But when their opinions were to be acted upon, it was found that these anti-subscriptionists differed from each other, the majority condemning, not subscription to this or that set of Articles, but all sorts of subscription; and consenting to nothing in this way but a declaration, that they believed Scripture to be the word of God, or some other loose and equivocal assertion of the same or equal latitude. EDIT.

cessary to engage *their* attachment, even to that system of principles which the Church of England hath adopted. They are not *now* required to declare, or even to know any thing about these Articles. The Universities judge it sufficient that they are supposed to be *Christians;* they require no token of their professing the doctrines of our national Church. And if so, where is the consistency of so scrupulous a care that the people in other parts of the nation should be taught in our churches, only according to that system of propositions, from the profession of which, the Universities have thought fit to discharge their members, whom their statutes had obliged to it, and many of whom are to be trained up as instructors in the Established Church." Such will be the reasoning of the petitioners on occasion of our abolishing the Academical Subscription in question.

Let us here stop a moment, My Lord, to make a short enquiry concerning the effect which this abolishing of Subscription at Matriculation is like to have upon our elèves themselves. The licence and scepticism of the times too often subject them to be present at conversations, where pragmatical old or young men take upon them to discuss and censure, at random, the most im-

portant articles of the Christian faith: and it is not unnatural to suppose, that these discussions and censures may make a deep impression on the minds of young hearers. The heterodox orator comes *prepared* with his arguments, such as they are, against the doctrines of the Church; and ignorance, or modesty, or both, are sure to secure him against all opposition. The majority of the company is probably on his side; and few young academics, though they may suspect, or even discover, chicane and false reasoning in his harangues, have courage enough to give opposition to representations, which all around them seem, by their silent attention, to receive with so entire an approbation. Should, then, this spirit of cavilling at the established doctrines of the Church of England become epidemical amongst our youth, should it become fashionable with them to think every thing wrong which their graver predecessors established as right and scriptural, how could such a spirit be checked and controlled? Should you expostulate with any of our youth, discovered to be sceptically inclined, and remonstrate* to him that he is opposing himself to the doctrines detailed from the

* for remonstrate read represent. EDIT.

Scriptures in the Articles of the Church of England; his ready answer would be, "What have I to do with the Articles of the Church of England? The University required and defended *our* Subscription to them as long as it was defensible. But, in the year 1772, they found that the farce would take no longer. In solemn Convocation assembled, they, in that year, repealed the old absurd statute, requiring such Subscription, and left us at liberty to embrace whatever set of religious principles might best agree with our reason. We may now *contemn* those antiquated doctrines,

——Dîs ignoscentibus ipsis;

our governors themselves have given us the cue for contemning them; they dare not even mention them, in the Declaration[k] which they have

[k] The Declaration here alluded to, is that which was proposed to Convocation, Thursday, February 4, 1773; and, as it has been said, upon the recommendation of Lord North, (see Gent. Mag. 1773, p. 100.) who had been installed Chancellor, October 6, 1772. It amounted to a Declaration (in the English language) of conformity to the worship and Liturgy of the Church of England, and was of the same general import with that, which at Cambridge was substituted for Subscription upon taking a Degree. Something has been already said in the preface concerning the mockery and contempt with which this

substituted in the place of our Subscription to them.

I am well aware, as your Lordship will be, that the reasonings I have been detailing, in the persons of the gentlemen at the *Feathers*, and of our academical youth, are by no means conclusive. The propriety of the Subscriptions in question, and even the necessity of them, to the safety of the Church of England, has been clearly set forth and demonstrated, in "[1]An Answer to a Pamphlet, intitled, Reflections on the Impropriety

concession was received by the Socinianizing M.A.'s of Cambridge. In this, read the usual course and consequences of concession; perils surround the steps of those who heedlessly seek to accommodate and so to reconcile the adversary, forgetting what is due to the sacred deposit of Gospel truth, and to the Church which is the guardian and depositary of that truth. EDIT.

[1] This Article is not in the Oxford collection of papers on the Matriculation question, printed 1772. Its main object was to prove the illegality of substituting a *Declaration* for a *Subscription* at Matriculation, "it being utterly inconsistent with our Magna Charta, and consequently with our oath, and as such, it is hoped that it will be rejected by Convocation." It was rejected by a very large majority. This pamphlet, sets forth "the danger of making concessions to clamour and faction;" it asks, "why needs this University be terrified into a surrender, or any kind of submission, by the

and Inexpediency of Lay-Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles in the University of Oxford." Yet "this will not convince, although it should convince," our brisk antagonists. And should the proposed abolition of Subscription at Matriculation take place in the University, the conclusions above deduced from that supposed event will readily, weak as they are, pass current, and be loudly insisted on, for disparaging the doctrines of our Church, in a trifling, heedless age, with which, the flimsiest arguments of infidelity have force enough to beat down the strongest "proofs of holy writ."

And thus, it is much to be feared, that your University, My Lord, ever renowned for sober, Christian principles, and for heroic courage in avowing and maintaining them, particularly against the rage and nonsense of fanaticism, menaces of a Sir William Meredith? For be it understood, that those menaces extend far beyond the present subject of debate, our *Undergraduate Subscription* to the Thirty-nine Articles, and will not be appeased by the abolition of it." And are the menaces of a Wilks, a Baines, a Wood in the present day, all of which menaces have ends and purposes far beyond the removal of Academic Tests, to shake the intrepidity, or confound the judgment, of the Universities upon these points? EDIT.

even while it saw *Hannibalem ad portas;*—that this illustrious University is upon the point of furnishing a plea for universal scepticism, for levelling the fences of the Church of England, (whose model is that Apostolic Church which was established under the particular direction of Christ himself,) that the wild boar out of the wood may root up, and the wild beasts of the field may lay waste, "the place of the vineyard which GOD's right hand hath planted."

Still, it will be urged, that the propriety and gravity of truth are always in the first place to be attended to; nor is any advantage to be sought, or accepted, from any measure that may violate it. That if these Subscriptions are wrong in themselves—if there be an absurdity in requiring them—if they justly provoke the general clamour against us—no consideration of mischievous consequences apprehended, ought to have any weight to withhold us from removing scandals and nuisances from our constitution. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*

Permit me, therefore, My Lord, briefly to enquire, What are these dreadful mischiefs so loudly complained of, in our requisition of the Subscription in question to the Thirty-nine

Articles? And if they shall appear to be no other than mere bugbears, let us by no means suffer ourselves to be frighted by them into a compliance with the demands of false representation, and impertinent clamour.

The first objection I shall take notice of, is drawn from the original end and design for which the Thirty-nine Articles were destined by the compilers of them. It is said, that " they were intended for no other purpose, than that they might be subscribed to by preachers and pastors, the teachers of religion; from which provision, a perfect quietness and concord, in religion, was, with the greatest assurance, expected."

But, My Lord, if the orthodoxy of the teachers was looked upon as an effectual mean of general uniformity, we must then suppose, that, in those days, " the Priest's lips" were thought to " preserve knowledge;" and that the people believed it to be their duty " to seek the law at his mouth." And, if this were uniformly the case, if the teacher did, in all parts of the kingdom, ingenuously and conscientiously conform his instructions to the Thirty-nine Articles, as containing the fundamental and essential doctrines of the holy Scriptures, and the people did regularly and humbly resort on Sundays to the

church, to sit under his instructions, nothing more would then perhaps be necessary for the purpose mentioned in the *Title* of the Articles, than the Subscription of the teachers of religion.

But, between the years 1562 and 1581, this provision appears to have been found[m] insufficient for effecting its intended purpose. It was there-

[m] From the first settlement of the Church, there had been a party in it, enslaved in their consciences to the supremacy of Calvin, both in matters of discipline as well as doctrine. He sat on his throne at Geneva with a triple crown on his head, fulminating against all who dared to depart from his newly-invented platform of Church government. This spiritual thraldom continued to increase, and Presbyterianism (now a bygone and obsolete ISM in our land) was then making rapid progress, and threatening to bring about what it afterwards accomplished, the destruction of the Church and Monarchy. Lord Leicester's proposition in 1581, arose out of the necessity of resisting this growing and progressive mischief. It was founded upon the maxim, "principiis obsta;" a principle as fit to be acted upon in 1834 as 1581. The malignant industry of the Socinian, rationalist, and free-thinker in the present day, requires check and counteraction, as much as those of the Puritan and Presbyterian; perhaps more so, because these malignants are occupied upon a more fearful object, (the elaborate falsification of the words of Scripture,) seeking by Pseudocriticism to seduce the youthful scholar, and ensnare his conscience by sophistries, which he cannot as yet unravel. EDIT.

fore thought proper by the Queen and her Ministry, as well as by the governors of the University, to *extend* the obligation to this Subscription, and more particularly to interest every youth of our *religious academical community* in the cause of the Church of England. This measure is perfectly conformable to the expressed design of the *Articles*: "the avoiding diversity of opinions, and the establishing consent touching true religion." For these expressions in the *Title* of the *Articles* were not intended, I suppose, to be confined to the *opinions* of the Clergy, but to extend to all the members of the Church of England: and every one of them was, no doubt, expected, if not to subscribe to the Articles, yet to receive them, "not as the word of man," but as declaring the plain and true meaning and import of "the word of God."

The objection, therefore, in our view, against Academical Subscriptions, viz. "that the Articles were originally meant to be subscribed by the Clergy only," is not fairly urged, nor is of any weight, even though we grant Clerical Subscription to have been at first supposed to be all that was necessary. It does not, by the *Title* of the Articles, appear to have been the first intention of the then governors in Church

and State, to confine their operation to the Clergy; and if it had been so, still, when that restriction seemed likely to fail of answering the expectation of government, and the Established Church began to be in danger, schism assailing it on the one side, and Popery on the other,

——hâc lupus, hâc canis—

common prudence could not fail to recommend the extending of Subscription, in such a manner, as might seem best calculated to effect the purpose for which the Articles were compiled; the securing the interests of the Established Church. And what could be more effectual to that end, than the requiring this Subscription from every member of the great nursery of religion and learning? From such persons our religious establishment might naturally expect the firmest support, or the deepest detriment; and no measure could be wiser than to attach them to its cause.

But, My Lord, the most piquant wisdom of a former age may, it seems, grow vapid in process of time; and the more intense illuminations of reason and learning which we at present enjoy, have thrown the light of our ancestors into the gloom of Egyptian darkness. Unhappily and

disgracefully involved in it by our Academical laws, we are in haste to get out of it, and do not scruple "to own our fathers have been fools too long."

Their folly, we are told, which, however, we did not see, till a club of infidels pointed it out to us, consisted in requiring the Subscription of raw, ignorant boys[n], a Subscription essentially implying an assent, founded on sober and ac-

[n] The ignorance of Matriculated and Undergraduate Students in matters of religion generally, as well as specially, and particularly in the Thirty-nine Articles, formed the Achillëan argument of the Blackburnes and Jebbs and Merediths of 1772; but *non valet argumentum ab ignorantia* in 1834; *non valet a juventute;* for though it cannot be said that the young Student even now is master of the metaphysics of the five points, or the unsearchable things of the triune Godhead, (and who is equal to these things?) it can be said, and ought to be constantly affirmed, that his knowledge of the Articles is such in quantity and quality, in suitableness and sufficiency, as to warrant the University in asking of him that testimony of religious opinion, which is given and understood to be given by the act of Subscription. The care now taken of the religious part of a child's education, and his *later* entrance at the University, have effectually deprived the anti-subscriptionist of his favourite point, "how can a child assent to what he has never been taught, and cannot understand;" he now is taught, and does understand. EDIT.

curate examination, to certain abstruse doctrines of which they are necessarily ignorant; and, therefore, are but "scurvily used" by such requisition.

The weight of this exception to our statute, rests on these three points:

I. That the doctrines contained in the Thirty-nine Articles, are abstruse.

II. That the young subscriber is necessarily ignorant of their meaning, and of the proofs of their truth.

III. That his subscription necessarily implies an assent, founded on sober and accurate examination.

First then, let us consider the charge of abstruseness.

The epithet *abstruse* is applied originally to things that are more inwardly reposited, in the penetralia of the places in which they reside, and, as it were, *thrust backwards*, so as not to be obvious to transient and careless observation.

This character is unavoidably applicable to most of the objects that engage our speculation. The causes of things are either entirely hidden from us; or, if we happen to discover these, yet

their mode of operation will often remain an impenetrable secret. Numberless qualities retire into the penetralia of substances, (which is the case also of the elementary substances,) and are not dragged into light but by accident, or by unwearied experiment.

Thus it is with regard to the elementary substance of fire; dispensed, perhaps, to every thing corporeal, but hid deepest in those substances which are most densely compacted. It is intimately abstruded in what poetical licence terms the *veins* of flint, not to be driven from those recesses but by strong concussions; and it was one of the tasks imposed on man,

Ut silicis venis abstrusum excuderet ignem.

But though the task of tracing natural abstrusenesses to their secret retirements has often been successfully executed, nature has reserved numberless others which mock our deepest researches. And for reasons abundantly more cogent, many declarations and intimations occurring in the Old and New Testaments, are unavoidably *abstruse;* not only to young academics, but to the most inquisitive veterans in learning. The doctrines and facts there set forth, are such as the most penetrating wit of man could never

have guessed at: and because nature and human speculation can exhibit nothing analogous to some of those facts and doctrines, therefore the proud self-confidence of infidelity pronounces them false and absurd. Thus, with regard to the Scripture doctrine of the holy Trinity:—"The whole range of *created* beings," it is urged, "can furnish no instance of three distinct subsistences united in, and equally partaking of, one and the same substance:"—this is most true; but let us hear the deduction—"*therefore*, it is impossible that the *uncreated* God should subsist in this manner." This is the reasoning of infidelity—"this is her foolishness; and her disciples praise her saying." And though some have, by partial quotations from, and strained glosses upon, those passages of Scripture, which affirm the doctrine of the holy and undivided Trinity, attempted to explain away the meaning and import of those passages, and affected to reject this important doctrine, upon the authority of the Scriptures; nothing is more evident, than that this torturing of the sacred text was suggested by the pride and arrogance of human reason, disdaining to admit the reality of any thing whose nature and verity it cannot comprehend[n].

[n] It seems sufficiently evident, that the Arians of our days

But this fact being so often in Scripture declared by God himself, it will readily be admitted for a truth by all sober reasoners upon that authority. The *manner* of this triune subsistence will, in the mean time, remain as *abstruse* and untraceable as numberless modes of existence and operation in created nature, which, though inscrutable themselves, produce effects most evident;

——Causa latet, vis est notissima.

The most incredulous philosophers, nay the divines at the Feathers, contentedly ignorant of the natural cause, will allow the reality of its effects, at the same time that they blasphemously exclaim against a supernatural fact, evidenced again and again by the word of God himself!

But if the Scriptures are, from the nature of many of the subjects they treat of, necessarily *abstruse*; so also is the divinely dark theology of infidelity in a far higher degree. Its reasonings, which it has sometimes taken the liberty to style demonstrations, are founded upon prin-

do rather rest their rejection of the catholic doctrine of the holy Trinity upon its disagreement with all natural apprehensions and experiences, than upon the deficiency of Scripture-proofs of it. *Original note.*

ciples, established by no one *having authority*, but altogether arbitrarily assumed ; and affect to evince, what it calls the " doctrines of natural religion," such as, an *after-state*, with its *rewards and punishments*, by arguments, in which there are always some propositions, which, if not rested on divine authority, may as reasonably be denied as affirmed. Nor is it credible that any one infidel does, or ever did, believe these great truths in his heart, upon the recommendation of those philosophical demonstrations, which are set up as rivals to the authority of the word of God.

The doctrines set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles are *abstruse* from the same cause that renders the holy Scriptures so. They contain those of the holy Scriptures. But the design of these Articles was, to render those doctrines, if not less *abstruse*, yet more methodical, by collecting the import of various scattered texts of Scripture, into so many distinct points. And if, from the fashion of the times in which they were compiled, some few scholastic expressions occur in them, they may, with the greatest ease, be opened by the tutor, to the apprehension of the youngest academic. And this labour is greatly facilitated by those of several little comments on

the Articles, which have been published for the use of the younger students in divinity, adducing the several texts of Scripture, by which each scriptural article is supported; and referring the young student to those ancient histories and testimonies, by which the truth of those articles that are referred to them is established.

It appears, I trust, by this time, that the circumstance of *abstruseness* in these Articles, is no reason for decrying the Undergraduate-Subscription: especially since the Subscription to the truth of the holy Scriptures, which is recommended in the room of it, is liable to the same objection in a greater degree. Nor can the charge of absurdity be supported against our Statute requiring such Subscription from Undergraduates, unless the second and third objections above mentioned can be maintained. Let us make trial of their force. The second is,

II. That the young Subscriber is necessarily ignorant of the meaning of the Articles to be subscribed, and of the proofs alleged in support of their truth.

My Lord, I will not scruple to assert, that this is an arbitrary and false assertion. The main, fundamental doctrines of our faith are, in the Articles, as clearly expressed, as words can

express them. And the several texts of Scripture, on whose authority these Articles rest, are, as is above observed, to be seen without difficult researches. Nor is it an unreasonable task for the tutor, who is required by one of our statutes to make the Articles the subjects of his lectures, to set these proofs before his pupil in a few hours before his Matriculation. All that seems necessary in this case, is to provide that such instruction° shall not, on any account, be omitted; but that the tutor shall solemnly declare to the Vice-Chancellor, in a prescribed form of words, that he has carefully read to his pupil, and confirmed by proper citations from the holy Scriptures, and by proper allegations from ecclesiastical history and testimony, the Thirty-nine Articles, to which he is now to subscribe.

The last of the three points implied in the

° Since this was written, to the old requisitions of the Statutes upon the subject of tutorial duties in respect of religious instruction, there have been added many other direct and indirect obligations of the same sort, some arising out of Academic, and some out of Collegiate, ordinances, but all concurring in this, that is, in imparting to the student so large and exact a knowledge of the Articles of the Church of England, as to silence the old hackneyed argument *ab ignorantiâ*. EDIT.

exception to our Statute requiring Under-graduate-Subscription, is,

III. That this Subscription necessarily supposes an assent founded on sober and accurate examination.

That an assent is implied in the Subscription, is most certain; and it is as certain, that this assent again implies examination. But examination, My Lord, is an indeterminate word, admitting of various degrees of the mind's application; and the objectors will find it hard, though they talk so plausibly at large, to assign the precise degree of it, below which a rational assent cannot be given. Were it necessary that such an examination should precede that act of the mind, as should extend to every question and scruple that scepticism and infidelity may suggest, a long life would be abundantly too short for the task, and every man would go out of the world a stranger to the fruits and hopes of Christian faith.

Evidently therefore, a limited degree of examination is sufficient to our reasonable assent; and yet, we are still at a loss how we are to mark that degree.

We read in the Acts of the Apostles, (ch. ii.) that three thousand persons assented to and

embraced the Christian doctrine in *one day*, upon the hearing of *one* sermon. What could they examine in that space of time, more than the appositeness of the Scripture-proofs adduced in that sermon, and the reality of the miracle they had heard with their ears, and of that capital one of the resurrection, Peter had evidenced to them. The same miracles, the same Scripture-proofs, in conjunction with many other, solicit our assent to the doctrines contained in the Articles. And if it be replied, that the miracle of *speaking with tongues* addressed itself immediately to the senses of this multitude, and therefore could not fail of convincing them: I answer, first, that it did fail of convincing, perhaps, a greater multitude, equally witnesses of it, who chose to ascribe it to the influence of new wine. And secondly, that however men of reason and shrewdness may despise those who do not, in the case of miracles, attribute a force to the evidence of the senses, superior to that of traditional evidence, the Saviour of the world was of another mind. He plainly gives the greater merit to that faith, which admits, without a pause, the report of sober witnesses: "Thomas, saith he, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have be-

lieved." A standing demonstration of the gross folly of philosophical calculations, instituted and applied to Scripture facts, for determining the degrees of probability, arising from nearer and from more distant evidence!

But what will our rational philosophic examiners say to the faith inculcated into the hearts of multitudes, by the preaching of John the Baptist? John, as the Scripture informs us, "did no miracle," and yet the people, in vast crowds, flocked to his Sermons on repentance, and "were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." And we no where read, that they were condemned as over-hasty in yielding their assent to his mere declarations concerning the near approach of the Messiah. He might, indeed, allege some or all the prophecies predicting *his* coming; but his followers had not, till long after, opportunity of *examining* whether those Scriptures had reference to Jesus Christ or not. Nay, the most learned among that people at that time, the Scribes and Doctors of the law, the professed *examiners* of the Scriptures, could never be brought, even by his astonishing miracles, to receive him for the promised Messiah, whom he declared himself to be. Examination has no end with those who are dis-

posed to demur, and to wait till the everflowing river is all gone by. But the unphilosophical, well-meaning hearers of the Baptist, made no delay to come to a resolution, upon grounds for which the *petitioning* gentry would despise them; though the Saviour of the world gave the highest sanction to those grounds, by submitting himself to the baptism with which they had been baptized.

The Scriptures alleged for the truth of our Articles, are more decisive than those then unfulfilled prophecies by which John supported his exhortations; and are abundantly sufficient to convince, if not the men of reason, that *bellua multorum capitum*, yet every sincere, well-meaning enquirer. And, unless the unchanging God has changed his plan, a degree of examination not inferior to that which he approved as sufficient in the hearers of the Baptist, cannot now be absurd or blame-worthy in his sight.

I doubt not, My Lord, but these haughty professors of reason would pity any one who should yield himself to Christ, and exclaim, "Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel!" on the evidence which convinced the guileless simplicity of Nathanael. His process of examination was very short. Our blessed

Lord told him, "I saw thee under the fig-tree," and immediately his faith embraced his Saviour in the exclamation above cited. His conviction was suitable to the character given him by Christ, "an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile." And though a shrewd *examiner*, who loves to search things to the bottom before he yields his assent, would, doubtless, have withheld it from the demand of this dubious miracle, for Christ might have seen Nathanael under the fig-tree without one; yet Nathanael's faith was received with complacency and benignity by the Son of God, who promised him that it should be nourished and rewarded with higher degrees of evidence.

I have never heard, My Lord, that Queen Elizabeth was censured for too hastily adopting the Articles[p], and ordering and enacting Sub-

[p] It has been repeated *ad nauseam*, that James I. was the first that required Subscription; and hence the three Articles of the 36th Canon have been called "James's darling Articles." Now it is quite clear, that from the time that Whitgift was seated in the chair of Canterbury, 1583, Subscription had been required, first, to the Queen's supremacy; secondly, to the Liturgy, ordination and consecration services, being agreeable to the word of God; and, thirdly, to the Thirty-nine Articles, being agreeable to the same holy word;

scription to be made to them. And yet it can hardly be conceived, that she gave them that sober and accurate examination which our objectors seem to require from every subscriber. She had recourse to the learned in the Scriptures for setting forth those genuine doctrines of them, which were then generally allowed, and those also that stood in opposition to the gross errors of Papists, Puritans, Anabaptists, Quakers, &c. and she reasonably supposed that those learned and sober divines better saw the force of Scripture allegations, both for establishing fundamental doctrines, and condemning heresy and schism, (for infidelity had then no existence,) than she herself could do by the help of the nicest scrutiny.

A thousand familiar instances must convince your Lordship of the futility of those patriotic examinations and discussions in politics, whose pretended aim is the investigation and discovery of truth, but whose real scope is to confound and stifle it. A volubility of words, accompanied by

which are, in short, the propositions of the three articles of the 36th Canon. Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles was first required of the Clergy 1570, by an Act of Parliament, entitled, *An Act for the Ministers of the Church to be of sound Religion.* 13 Eliz. cap. 12.

an air of earnestness and zeal for the public good, can make the grossest falsehoods look plausible while the sound rings in our ears; but, to all except genuine patriots, the charm generally dies with the sound.

After all; though examination in all cases, and especially in religion and politics, justly demands the privilege of preceding assent, yet we all know, that in politics men disposed to cavil and demur are never likely to come to a determination; and, "Ego amplius deliberandum censeo," will be the incessant cry of those who are desirous to confound all measures relating to public utility.

Just the same is the case of our examiners and deliberators in religion; upon whose principle, no man living could rationally, even in the course of Nestor's years, embrace the Christian faith, nor any Subscription to the Articles of it ever be made. Consider the hundred thousand questions and scruples which have been agitated concerning every iota and tittle of the sacred volumes; and your Lordship will soon see, that such an examination as these rational objectors to the Subscription in question require, an examination that may clear all doubts and unravel all difficulties, would equally bar all determinations, all

Subscriptions, as well those of grave Bishops as of Oxford Undergraduates.

Let then the Church of England, and her faithful ally the University of Oxford, stand unshaken upon their ancient basis; and let us not suffer them to be removed, under disingenuous pretences of placing them to better advantage. The main fundamental, scriptural doctrines of our Church, as marked in those Articles, are, to any eye that will see it, most plainly deduced from incontestable proofs of the Scriptures: and as for those particular Articles which rely on facts and circumstances of Church-history, and ancient testimony, such as the canon of Scripture, the errors of Councils, &c. let it be held no abatement of the sufficiency of our examination, if we rely, for the truth of them, on the testimony of the compilers of the Articles; which is hardly so confident a reliance as that which every member of our Church, who is unacquainted with the Hebrew and Greek languages, places on the skill and integrity of the translators of our Bible.

We hear it urged, that "something must be done, some relaxation of our Statute be contrived, for abating the clamours of our enemies, and enabling our friends to support us."

But though this be gravely said, it is difficult to hear it without smiling. Whence arise these clamours? From our requiring our eléves to declare by a Subscription their acknowledgment of the doctrines of that Church of which they are all baptized members, and in which many of them are to be professed instructors: a declaration which a three hours' conference with their tutor will qualify them to make, without any reasonable imputation of absurdity and prematurity.

What then is that support which we need from our friends? And wherein could our enemies harm us for continuing to enforce our Statute, which has, for almost two hundred years, operated without reprehension, and for which no succedaneum has yet been, nor probably ever can be, offered, which will not expose the University to the irruption of prevaricating infidels and schismatics? Alas! they would, I confess, be likely to do us much harm, if it should ever be in their power; as the most pernicious enemies of religion and her friends, are they who clamour loudly for reason, and yet will not hear it.

It is acknowledged, then, that we stand in need of some powerful protection, and we therefore fly to him for it who is, under God, the most able to protect us—by other means than that pre-

posterous one, of throwing down the fortifications to secure the fortress.

To you, My Lord, your orthodox University looks up, as to him whose eloquence, and wisdom, and authority are best qualified to preserve her dignity and her utility inviolate, to "deliver her from unreasonable[s] and wicked men, for all men have not faith;" and by maintaining her laudable *Subscription*, to fix her as a lasting bulwark of that genuine, apostolical Church, which Popery, Calvinism, and Infidelity have hitherto in vain united their efforts to overturn.

In Te spes omnis, Hegio nobis sita est;
Te solum habemus: Tu es Patronus, Tu Parens;
Si deseris Tu, Periimus.

[s] 2 Thess. iii. 2. The word ἀτόπων, here translated *unreasonable*, signifies incommodious, troublesome, unseasonable, impertinent. Some would include in the import of it the words, unplaced, unbeneficed. *Original note.*

THE END.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

UNDERGRADUATE SUBSCRIPTION.

EXTRACTS

FROM A

COLLECTION OF PAPERS

PUBLISHED IN OXFORD

IN 1772

ON THE SUBJECT OF

SUBSCRIPTION TO THE XXXIX ARTICLES,

Required from Young Persons at their Matriculation.

WITH A PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Upon Sir William Meredith's Motion on the same Subject, Feb. 1773.

OXFORD,

REPRINTED AND REPUBLISHED BY W. BAXTER,

Opposite the Town Hall;

SOLD BY THE BOOKSELLERS IN OXFORD;

AND BY MESSRS. RIVINGTON, AND ROAKE AND VARTY, LONDON.

1835.

The Editor presents these Papers, with sentiments of respect and admiration, to those faithful Non-Resident Members of Convocation, who, in communicating their approval of the late Oxford Declaration, gave assurances of their willingness to attend personally in Convocation to defend the rights and principles of the University, as a place of GOOD AND GODLY *as well as literary and scientific education. He thinks it right to observe, that he has left out all those elaborate arguments in the Collection which relate to the old questions about the power of Convocation to alter a Royal Statute; questions which, after the opinions of Messrs. Morton and Wilbraham in* 1759, *may be said to exist no longer. He has still farther consulted brevity, by making other omissions. In short, he has selected from a closely printed volume of* 140 *pages, such parts only as throw light upon the origin and object of Academic Subscriptions, and especially upon the differences between the sorts and degrees of obligation created by the Subscription of Graduates and Undergraduates, in order to shew, that the* animus *of the University in requiring Subscription at Matriculation is already sufficiently apparent, and that there is no necessity to superinduce upon the Statute Book the ridiculous deformity of a second Epi-*

nomis to explain the meaning of the Statute De tempore et conditionibus Matriculationis. *As to the substitution of a Declaration for a Subscription, that very useless and capricious disturbance of the usage of* 250 *years has been repeatedly shewn to be an experiment full of latent as well as obvious danger. It was shewn to be so during the controversy of* 1772, *and recently in an argument of considerable eloquence and ability, as also in a Circular of Interrogatories, indicative of great accuracy of thought and compass of knowledge. It was not therefore deemed necessary to increase the bulk of the pamphlet, by annexing another series of extracts upon that head.*

Oxford, Jan. 6, 1835.

PREFATORY STATEMENT.

SUBSCRIPTION at Matriculation is the only subject handled in the arguments of this collection, that being the vertical point of the controversy as it was carried on at Oxford in 1772, 1773. It was *Undergraduate Subscription* which most abundantly supplied the disciples of *the Confessional* with their topics of declamation. It was this which had become the subject of universal and almost exclusive discussion in the University, having been thrice introduced into the House of Convocation in 1773; once in a proposition to substitute for Subscription at Matriculation, *a Declaration* of Conformity to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England; and twice afterwards, in propositions to append *an Epinomis*, or Explanation to the Matriculation Statute, which young students were to read, or to have read to them, at Matriculation. These are the reasons why the whole collection of the Oxford Tracts was devoted to this argument alone. The Academic questions about Subscription at Cambridge turned upon the practice of subscribing the three Articles of the 36th Canon, as a test of opinion and condition of Graduation upon taking Degrees; at Oxford the propriety of that requisition was not controverted.

Reference having been made to the questions argued at Cambridge, in order to shew their great difference from the questions discussed at Oxford, it may be fit to observe, that when Cambridge had substituted the declaration, "*I am bonâ fide a member of the Church of England as by law established*," for a Subscription to the three Articles of the 36th Canon, upon taking a Degree, that University found, at the very first working of the substituted formulary, that they were just as far as ever from satisfying the cravings of Liberalism; the Socinians and Rationalists, at whose instance this concession had been made, thought the declaration as narrow and illiberal as the subscription, and, like the Arians of old, demanded some larger and more indefinite expression of religious, or rather irreligious, opinion. The Grace which proposed the substitution passed the Senate *June* 23, 1772; and six months afterwards, 17th *January*, 1773, Blackburne's own son, and probably at his father's suggestion, refused to make *the bonâ fide declaration*, tendering to the astonished Vice-Chancellor another in lieu of it; "*I, Thomas Blackburne, do hereby declare my full persuasion of the truth of the Christian Religion as exhibited in the Scriptures; and that I have hitherto communicated with the Established Church, and have no present intention of communicating with any other.*" This substitute for the Academic substitute was of course rejected, and Thomas Blackburne lost his B.A. degree, not, however, without the most copious discharges of abuse against the illiberality of Church-of-Englandism, and the

intolerance of Cambridge. One of these Arian or Socinian railers, not without some humour, calls the *bonâ fide* substitute for Subscription, *idem Monachus sed alio cucullo indutus.* Priestley, Lindsey, Jebb, Blackburne, and the rest, combine their sarcasms to make it contemptible: one considers it a proof, "*that narrow-minded orthodoxy, equipped with brief authority, is loath to depart from its intrenchments;*" another calls it "*an Academic Shibboleth;*" another says of it, "*that the cause of religious despotism scarcely suffers from the change.*" It was reviled "*as an insidious substitution,*" a "*dexterous manœuvre,*" "*an alteration in form but not in spirit;*" and Blackburne, concentrating his bitterness, pronounces it to be "*a coup de maitre, which perhaps was never outdone by the most refined politician in an Italian conclave.*" In short, nothing appears to have been gained by this attempt to conciliate the Rationalists and Freethinkers but greater bitterness of accusation and new forms of reproach; and if the ill-success of this attempt at accommodation be duly weighed, and the increased resentment produced by it, they will not fail to produce the conviction, that nothing will satisfy the belligerent and rapacious theology of such Reformers, but the abrogation of all tests as to the *quid*, *quale*, and *quantum* of an Academic's religion.

The object and occasion of these Papers will be still farther elucidated, if there be added, a short narrative of the transactions which took place in and out of Convocation during 1772, 1773. The narrative will shew the solicitude of the Academic

body to give the subject the fullest and most serious consideration; it will serve also to prove the unshaken firmness of the University in maintaining its ancient discipline in all those particulars, which were deemed essential to *good and godly learning*, in other words, to the attainment of those ends which had been specially prescribed to the vigilance of the University, by its great Act or Charter of Incorporation, 13 Eliz.

To follow the order of proceedings, the narrative should begin early in March, 1772, about six months before Lord Lichfield's death, when the University appointed a delegacy of nine to examine records, and ascertain how far its power extended relative to changes or alterations in the matter of Subscription. The same course, about the same time, had been adopted at Cambridge upon the recommendation of its Chancellor, the Duke of Grafton. A year afterwards, (about six months after Lord Lichfield's death, and about five after the installation of his successor Lord North,) a proposal was submitted to Convocation on the 4th of February, 1773, to substitute, as had been done at Cambridge in the case of Bachelors seven months before, *a declaration* of conformity to the worship and liturgy of the Church of England for a subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles at Matriculation. Excellent speeches are said to have been made upon the occasion, but the House would not consent to any alteration; the proposed formulary scarcely came into discussion, for the whole time and attention of Convocation were occupied upon previous questions,

relating to the principles of the proposed measure, and the powers of the Academic body.

In the following month, notice was sent to the Colleges, that a Convocation would be holden on Wednesday, the 3d day of March, 1773, at twelve o'clock, when it would be proposed to subjoin the following *Explanation* to the Statute *De tempore et conditionibus Matriculationis*, Tit. ii. §. 3. "*Ad eximendum omnem scrupulum circa sensum hujus statuti, notandum hìc voluit Academia, nihil aliud intendi per subscriptionem supradictam, quam ut ii, qui in Matriculam Universitatis redigendi accedunt, hâc subscriptione testantur, se esse de Ecclesiâ Anglicanâ, et nullam doctrinam tenere, quantum ipsi sciunt, contrariam doctrinis in eâdem receptis, necnon se fore conformes, quamdiu in Academiâ vixerint, cultui et liturgiæ istius Ecclesiæ prout ea nunc legibus est stabilita. Ne vero hoc Statutum, aut minus innotescat, aut perperam intelligatur, omnes scholares matriculandi hanc explicationem coram Vice-Cancellario legere, vel lectam audire tenentur.*" No sooner had the proposed *Explanation*, or *Epinomis*, been brought to the knowledge of Members of Convocation by the Vice-Chancellor's notices, than some queries were drawn up, and presented to his consideration. "1. Whether there is any real difference between the late proposal of repealing this Statute and the proposed method of explaining it? 2. Whether, supposing a difference . . . they are not both . . . expressly repugnant to Tit. x. §. 2? 3. Whether the present proposed Latin formulary is not the same in sense with the English one, that has already

received the *negative* of a very great majority of Convocation? 4. Whether the Latinity is not such as, in the exercise of a boy at Westminster, would expose him to severe corporal correction? 5. Whether it is not unprecedented, and contrary to common justice, to propose again hastily, and, as far as appears, *mero motu*, a matter that has so recently received a solemn determination? 6. Whether, if it were thought expedient, that a matter of so much consequence should be reconsidered, we ought not in such a case to follow the example of our superiors BY A CALL OF THE HOUSE AND TIMELY NOTICE, in order to take the sense of the whole University? 7. Whether the Vice-Chancellor is not, in his own conscience, convinced, THAT IF ALL THE COUNTRY CLERGYMEN WHO HAVE BEEN EDUCATED HERE HAD VOTES IN CONVOCATION, the matter would not be rejected fifty to one? 8. Whether this proposal will not bring discredit and disquietude to the author of it, and to the University? 9. Whether therefore the question ought not to be withdrawn, and notice given accordingly by advertisement in the public prints?"

These points of enquiry seem to have produced a postponement of the day originally fixed for holding a Convocation; instead of the 3d of March, as originally notified, it was held on the 18th. But before the question was put, three members of the House spoke in succession against the legality of the whole proceeding. No attempt was made to vindicate it from the charge, and the Vice-Chancellor, perhaps to gain time to consider these unforeseen

objections, dissolved Convocation without putting the question. The matter, however, did not end here; for the proposed *Epinomis* was again submitted to Convocation, Wednesday, March 30, 1773, when, after a long discussion, it was finally rejected by a very large majority.

Such are some of the facts, as collected from the Periodicals of the day, which the Editor has thought it useful to prefix to these Papers. With respect to the argument itself, he shall leave it with these observations; that the extreme youth of students at the time of their Matriculation can no longer be urged against Subscription; and that the religious instruction which they now receive from their teachers, before they enter the University, is such as enables them with suitable and sufficient knowledge to bear witness to their belief of the doctrines of the Church of England, as set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles, and to give an implied promise of conformity to its discipline and worship. The great evil of too early an admission into the University has been corrected by the better judgments of the parents and guardians of the present day, who for the most part postpone the Matriculation of young men till they are 18 or 19 years of age; whereby, without legislation, those provisions of the Statute book which refer to the cases of boys of from 12 to 16 have passed into desuetude, and may be said to be virtually abrogated. Still, however, in spite of this improved practice, not only as to the time of entrance, but in the whole system of preparation for the University, the old sarcasms continue to be repeated,

but with virulence increasing in proportion to the diminution of their truth and justice. The anger of the adversary, instead of being mitigated by the very general removal of the old grounds of offence, has risen to a higher temperature, and broken out into language of fouler abuse and fiercer menace.

Under injustice so manifest and falsehood so notorious, is it not the duty of every well-wisher to the University, whether he hold office in it or not, (to which latter class the Editor belongs,) to reiterate the assertion, that by reason of riper years, and better religious instruction, those who now come to be Matriculated have been much more largely supplied than in former days with a knowledge of those truths and doctrines, or (to use the fashionable phrase of the Neologists) of those *facts*[a], of the Christian religion, which resound in our

[a] In using this term, I wish to protest against its introduction; specially, because when used in its neologistic sense, it brings disturbance upon the internal, external, and philosophical evidences of the Christian religion. It is to be observed, that these new nomenclators, to help on the cause of scepticism, assume the most opposite characters. At one time they are seen dissecting points of truth, even to capillary tenuity. At another, but still with a view to advance the same unchristian design, *they transform themselves* from very minute distinguishers, into very comprehensive generalizers of things essentially different. To call a doctrine *a fact* is to introduce confusion into the credenda of Christianity; it is to jumble under the same denomination points *doctrinal* with points *historical;* things *done* naturally or supernaturally, with things *taught*, *commanded*, *affirmed*, *concluded*, *proved*, *promised*, *threatened*. It is to be hoped, that the sceptics may not find any to patronize the introduction of such conceits into sacred science. Sophistry such as this would have disgraced the most sophistic period of the *Sæculum Scholasticum*.

Catechism, are preached in our Homilies, are enunciated in our Articles, are set forth and applied practically in the Liturgy and worship, form and constitution of our Church?

Another finesse of the adversary consists in the misrepresentation of the nature of the things subscribed. To serve a turn, he not only underrates the ages and attainments of the subscribers, but overrates the darkness and difficulty of the positions to which they affix their signatures.

That the Articles of our Church abound with mysterious truths, is readily admitted, with truths as momentous as they are mysterious, and as merciful as momentous; whether they be truths positive or negative, whether they relate to the whole body of Christ's Church, or the particular part or portion of it established in these realms, or to particular orders or individuals in that establishment; whether they appertain to things temporal or eternal; to the present world or that which is to come; to duties of positive institution or natural obligation; to the economy of nature or grace; to the being or attributes of God; to his will secret or revealed; to his Unity of Substance or Trinity of Persons, it is admitted that the Articles, like the Scriptures themselves, which supply their sacred warranties, abound with things which in their depths are hard to be understood; with secret things which the Almighty has been pleased to place as far beyond the reach of the proficient, as the novice in theology. It is admitted, that there is a sort of ἀκαταληψία, which may be predicated, with-

out reserve, of many of the things articulated; but then this incomprehensibility does not affect their truth and certainty as things revealed, nor their plainness for every practical purpose, nor their profitableness for the guidance of faith, nor their applicability as principles of peace and bonds of union. Their language is perspicuous enough, although those *realities* of doctrine which they enunciate may in many instances be above and beyond, although they be never contrary to, human reason. In short, if there be any weight in the objection against Subscription taken from the incomprehensibility of the mysterious truths contained in the Articles, it is as conclusive against all Subscription whatever, as against that of Undergraduates.

There is another point, of which a very mischievous use has been made; it relates to the *animus* of the University in making a Subscription to the Articles a condition of Matriculation. It is alleged, but without the slightest foundation in truth, that this act is required of young men as a proof of their formal and explicit assent and consent to all and each of the points of doctrine and discipline, which compose the confession of the United Church of England and Ireland. As this matter has been fully discussed in these papers, it will not be necessary to offer any other observations upon it, than simply to refer the reader to p. 4. of the *Parecbolæ*, and to desire him to compare the clause relating to Subscription at Matriculation, with the clauses relating to Subscription at Graduation, which he will find at pp. 90 and 91. In the first,

nothing more or other will be found than the single uncircumstantiated ordinance, *Articulis Fidei et Religionis subscribant:* but in the second it will be seen, that what was before nakedly appointed and ordained, is now clothed with various circumstances and conditions. The candidate for a Degree is not called upon simply to subscribe the Articles, as in the former case, but abundant provisions have been made to secure to the University and to the Church a well weighed and deliberate Subscription. A pledge is publicly given by the officer who presents the candidate, that such candidate has, in his presence, read the Articles, or heard them read; and farther, that in his presence also, he has read or heard read the three Articles of the 36th Canon, the last of which contains a solemn avowal, that the Thirty-nine Articles, all and every one of them, are agreeable to God's holy word. In these latter Subscriptions, the act is performed with a full knowledge of the subject, it having been previously set forth and explained in Courses of Lectures Tutorial and Professorial, as well as made a necessary part of the Examination for the Degree of B. A.; it is an act of the will, of the judgment, of the conscience; the subscribers put their names to the venerable document *scientes, volentes, ex animis;* as men, who have had their reason convinced, their faith confirmed, their choice determined, by a course of previous study, during which they have compared the Articles of the Church with the declarations of Scripture, and have found that the national confession is in perfect accordance with the revealed will.

Can any Epinomis make more plain the plainness of the University's intention? Here are two acts of Subscription; the one at Matriculation, the other at Graduation; and they are distinguished from each other by as many differences as could well be devised, the one having been advisedly reduced to a simple duct of the pen of the most indefinite import; the other having been raised to the dignity of a religious solemnity, by means of the preparations which precede it, the ceremonies which accompany it, and the obligations which are created by it. At Matriculation, the youthful Student does no more than enter his name upon the pages of a Register, to which the Articles are prefixed; upon taking a Degree, but before it is conferred, the Candidate signs as before; but it is no longer a bare subscription, a mere sign of the subscriber's being a member of the national Church; it is no longer a broad indication of agreement with its doctrine and discipline, nor a general voucher of conformity, nor an implied undertaking to comply with University and College ordinances as to attendance at Church and Chapel. What was before general, is now made special and particular; what was left undefined, has now a sense and significancy annexed to it, declaratory of a specific purpose and design. The University has made the act of Subscription upon taking a Degree to be, what the Church intended it should be in respect of Clerical Subscriptions, an act of assent and consent, a *bonâ fide*, *ex animo* manifestation of religious convictions upon *the Christian truths* which form the foundations of the doctrine and discipline of the Church, as well as

upon that doctrine and that discipline, when considered in their ecclesiastical relations to a visible congregation of faithful men. When the Candidate for a Degree signs, he does not merely subscribe, he certifies at the same time his solemn belief, that *the Articles of the Church are agreeable to the word of God.*

If, however, in spite of distinctions so expressive, or rather declaratory, of the mind and meaning of the University upon this matter, the scrupulous should still insist upon the necessity of a formal statutory explanation, the same scrupulosity to be consistent should in like manner require another Epinomis to explain the grounds or reasons upon which the University (or rather the Legislature) has exacted from the historical and theological ignorance of the Matriculated the Oath of Supremacy; and then another *Epinomis*, to explain the grounds and reasons upon which lay as well as clerical Graduates are required to subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles; and then another, to account for their subscriptions to the three Articles of the 36th Canon. In short, if these explanations were to be made coextensive with the large and various requisitions of the different *dilettanti* Reformers of the day, the slenderness of the little pocket volume of Parecbolæ might be made to swell almost to the bulk of Justinian's Institutes, whilst the appendage of all these Epinomic explanations would be found to rival in lengthiness its Platonic prototype.

But, after all, why are we called upon to change the practice of 250 years? Hear the answer in the

words of one of the advocates of this change—*to obviate the cavils and silence the clamours of the adversary*; as if these were days in which adversaries were by such accommodations to be satisfied or silenced; as if it were not matter of notoriety, that in every instance concessions have been made the grounds of fiercer requisitions, and more furious onsets. Would these poor compliances satisfy any one of our adversaries? would they not rather generate a repetition of the contumelies so lavishly poured upon Cambridge, when that University sought by its *bonâ fide* declaration in 1772 to disarm the fury of its assailants? As an *Irenicon*, it is altogether worthless; the alteration would but provoke the old scurrilities; it would be called *idem monachus alio cucullo indutus*; and if upon some of those wretched principles of expediency, which have of late so extensively superseded the principles of Christian truth, the University were to shape its tortuous course towards some hollow half-measure of conciliation, it would not only fail in its object, but offer to the assaults of the enemy an exposed frontage and weakened outworks; it would call forth more violent hostility and greater bitterness of insult; it would destroy the peace which exists within our walls, without removing the war which is raging without.

It must be repeated, that the Subscription of Undergraduates to the Thirty-nine Articles was never intended to be expressive of their assent and consent to all the theses contained in those Articles. That is reserved for maturer years and riper knowledge. To cite the words in the seventh Paper of

this Collection, p. 24, "there is no instance in which the Thirty-nine Articles are subscribed where an assent is intended to be required, but when that assent is expressed in terms, and not supposed to follow from the mere Subscription." It would be well if the young man to be matriculated were apprized of these facts, and made to perceive these distinctions, and so become fully cognizant of the intentions of the University in requiring at his hands this testimony of his Church-membership. It would be well too if the counsel of the writers at pp. 18 and 21, (which is already acted upon to a certain extent,) were universally attended to and adopted. "Let those whom it concerns instruct each Candidate for Matriculation to the extent of his capacity." "Every Tutor ought to satisfy his pupils of the real intention and meaning of their Subscription."

EXTRACTS

FROM A

COLLECTION OF PAPERS,

&c.

§. 1.

Origin of Subscription to the XXXIX Articles at Matriculation in the University of Oxford.

Ex Regist. Convoc. KK. p. 338.

A.D. 1581. Ann. Reg. 23.

Domino Roberto Comite Leycestriæ, *Canc.*
D^e^ James, *Vice-Canc.*
M^o^ Crane. M^o^ Madocks, *Proc.* Novembris 2.

SECUNDO *Novembris in celebri Convocatione Magistrorum Regentium et Non Regentium habita, lectæ erant literæ ab insignissimo Comite Leycestriæ Cancellario nostro ad venerabilem Convocationem hoc exemplo subscriptæ.*

"AND after my right hearty commendations, as often heretofore, so now by late complaints am I caused again to write unto you for reformation of divers disorders amongst you, both in matters of religion, in the exercises of learning, and in apparel,

and sum other pointes concerning conversation. The particulars are long to rehearce unto you, but may appear by a scedule inclosed[a], wherein the

[a] *Imprimis*, That whereas the old order of Matriculation is, that within six days of every Scholar's first coming to Oxford, he shall take an oath to observe the Statutes of this University, &c. and for as much as by the negligence and carelessness of many Heads, this hath been and daily is omitted, insomuch that many Scholars have lived here a long time being never registered in the University booke, nether at any time heretofore sworne to the said University, and by this means many papists have heretofore and may hereafter lurke among you, and be brought up by corrupt Tutors, nether yelding to God nor to her Majestie or your University theare bounden dutie, as hath of late yeares too much appeared, and is evident in sundry younge Students in your Universitie, sum being atte Rome, sum in the Seminaries and other places, all out of her Majesties obedience, I have thought good to have this order following to be established.

First, That no Scholler be admitted into any College or Hall of the Universitie, unless he first before the Vice-Chancellor subscribe to the Articles of Religion agreed upon, take the oathe of the Queen's Majestie supremacy, sweare to observe the Statutes of the Universitie if he be of lawful yeares to take an othe, and have his name regestred in the Matriculation boke, which is by Statute as I heare to remaine with the Chancellour or Vice-Chancellour, and have a note under the Vice-Chancellour's hand that he hath done the premisses, and the Head of the College or Hall of which he shall be, or some of the Deanes and Censors, doe at some convenient time signifie the said othe and Subscription to the whole company.

Secondly, That for as much as sundry parents, being themselves recusants, or knowne or suspected papists, have sent their sonns to the Universitie, and dayley doe, and are desirous to have their sonns by all likelyhood trayned up in the same religion, and for that purpose have as it may appear certaine select Tutors among you, of whome at the least they hope well to have their children instructed after their owne desire, I have thought good also to wish, that by Act of Convocation it may be likewise established, that noe Tutor hereafter be allowed, but such as be of sound religion, and that under the hand of the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, and three Doctors of Div. and three Bach. of Div. or three Preachers, for that purpose assembled all togeather where it shall please the Vice-Chancellor.

Thirdly, &c.

faults and such orders, as upon the present I could think convenient for redress of them are set down together, I heartily and very earnestly pray you upon perusing the said orders, if they shall be found such as in all pointes you like of, that you will take farder orders forthwith for the due and strict observation of them; and if upon consideration they shall not seem fit unto you for the purpose and time, then that you will out of hand add, diminish, alter, and change for new any thing that shall mislike, and setting down the same in such sort as in your own judgement you shall think most fit, to see them likewise severely and throughly executed and observed, that so the disorders and complaints of them may both ceace together, which I heartily wish; and so desiring to hear speedily from you what you shall do herein, I bid you heartily farewell.
From the Court the 5th of October, 1581.

"Your very friend, R. LEYCESTER."

"*Quibus literis lectis statim proponitur Convocationi quædam tam ad Statuta nostræ Universitatis observanda quam de juramento supremæ Regiæ Majestatis suscipiendo per omnes Scholares maturæ Ætatis priusquam in Collegia sive Aulas admittantur, tum etiam ut publicæ lectiones in singulis facultatibus diligenter observentur, quæ omnia et singula prout publice perlecta erant in Convocatione sic suo ordine subscribuntur.*"

The several Articles mentioned in the schedule being read in the Convocation, the Vice-Chancellor

added three more proposals, and then nominating Delegates to consider of them, they framed these[b] decrees following from them.

" *Novembris* 14°, *A. D.* 1581.

" *In solenni Convoc. Doct^m Mag^m Reg^m et non Reg. decimo quarto Nov. habita leges subscriptæ publice perlectæ et Communi omnium consensu approbatæ et sancitæ sunt.*

" *Imprimis.* It is decreed, that no Student, being of the age of 16 or upwards and unmatriculated, being already admitted into any College or Haule of this Universitie, shall theare any longer abide then the Friday sennight after the publication hereof, unless he have under the Vicechancellour's hand for the time being a certificate of his Subscription both to the Articles of Religion, her Majesties Supremacy, and also to observe the Orders and Statutes of this University, and have his name regestred in the Matriculation booke.

" *Item*, that no Student hereafter to be admitted ut supra shall longer stay than till the next Friday sennight after his admission, unless he perform all things in such sort as are above specified: except the said Scholler or Student, either now being or hereafter to be admitted, be not full 16 yeares of age, but being between 12 and 16, he shall but subscribe and be matriculat, and being under 12, he shall be matriculat onelye, and so continue till

[b] Ex Reg. KK. fol. 340, 341.

he or they be of years sufficient to performe the rest above specified. Provided alwayes, that the said Student or Scholler that is to performe any thing that is above specified shall attend upon Frydayes in Term time at the Vicechancellour's Court, and at all other times at his lodging.

"*Item*, that if the Head of any Colledge or Haule, or in his absence the Senior or Vice Head or Governour, doe suffer in his house any Student or Scholler by him admitted not performing the thinges above specified, he shall forfeit twenty shillinges and the Scholler forty shillinges for every weeke *toties quoties*.

"*Item*, that all private Tutors or Readers hereafter shall be allowed by the consent of the Vice-Chancellour, the Head of the same house whereof he or they shall be, and also the consent of a Doct. of Devinitye or two Preachers at the least.—And that no Tutor or Reader now beeing that is or shall be by othe detected of vehement suspicion of Popery shall, after the Nativ. of Xt. next insuinge, retain any Pupill or Scholler, unless he doe, being thereunto required, purge himself before the Vice-Chancellour and Proctors by his own othe, or the hands of three Preachers in the Universitie."

Extract from the present Statutes of the University, compiled in the year 1616.

"Tit. II. §. 3. Quotquot autem in Matriculam Universitatis redigendi accedunt, si decimum sextum suæ ætatis annum attigerint, Articulis Fidei et

Religionis subscribant; et de agnoscendo primatu Regiæ Majestatis, nec non de fidelitate Universitati exhibenda, ac Statutis, Privilegiis, et consuetudinibus ejusdem observandis, juxta formam hactenus usitatam, corporale juramentum præstent.

" Quod si infra decimum sextum et supra duodecimum ætatis annum extiterint, Articulis Fidei et Religionis duntaxat subscribent, et in Matriculam redigentur.

" Quod si duodecimum non excesserint, in Matriculam duntaxat referentur; utrique tamen postmodo, ubi ad maturam ætatem pervenerint, quâ cætera requisita præstare possint, tum demum ea præstare teneantur sub pœna non sistentium se Matriculandos."

" Tit. III. §. 2. Tutor vero Scholares Tutelæ et regimini suo commissos probis moribus imbuat, et in probatis authoribus instituat; et maxime in rudimentis Religionis et doctrinæ Articulis in Synodo *Lond.* (anno 1562.) editis: ac pro virili suo, disciplinæ in Ecclesia Anglicana publicè receptæ eos conformes præstabit. Quod si quis in aliquo prædictorum deliquerit, arbitrio Cancellarii vel Vice-Cancellarii coerceatur."

Commencement of Subscription to the three Articles in in the 36*th Canon.*

An. Dom. 1616. 14 Jacobi.

[c] It being insinuated to the King what dangers would proceed by the training up of yong Students

[c] Hist. and Antiq. Univ. Oxon. A. Wood, p. 322. and MSS. Hist. p. 736.

in grounds of Puritanisme and Calvinisme, if some directions did not issue out from his Majestie for the course of their studies, and that there was no readier way to advance the Presbyterial government in this kingdom than by suffering young Scholers to be seasoned with Calvinian doctrines; and that for want of Subscription to the three Articles contained in the 36th Canon, not only Lecturers, but divers other Preachers in and about the Universitie, positively maintained such points of doctrine as were not maintained or allowed by the Church of England. He therefore, having taken these things into consideration, did, by the advice of such Bishops and others of the Clergy as were then about him, dispatch upon the 18th of January these [d]Directions following to the Vicechancellor, certain Heads of Houses, the two Professors of Divinity, and the two Proctors of the University, to be carefully and speedily put in execution.

"JAMES REX.

"1. His Majesty signified his pleasure, that he would have all that take any Degree in Schooles to subscribe to the three Articles.

"2. That no Preacher be allowed to preach in the town but such as be every way conformable both by subscription and every other way.

"3. That, &c."

In consequence of the above Directions, a Convocation was holden on the 12th of Feb. 1616, in

[d] Reg. Convoc. N. fol. 32. a and b.

which "[e] Procuratores nominabant hos egregios viros ad deliberandum et statuendum de quibusdam ad Directiones Regias propositas spectantibus, nec non, &c.

viz. Doctorem Goodwin,
——— Prideaux, &c. &c."

On the last day of March, 1617, the decrees of the above delegates were read and approved in Convocation. The first of which is as follows: "Forma subscribendi ab omnibus graduum Academicorum Candidatis diligenter observanda Hujusmodi perpetua esto—Ego A. perlectis prius vel ab alio coram me recitatis orthodoxæ fidei et Religionis Articulis XXXIX, et in sacra Synodo Londini habita A. D. 1562 constabilitis, simulque tribus Capitibus in alia Synodo Londinensi sub annum 1604 decretis et in Canone 36[f] redactis, sciens volensque ex animo

[e] Reg. Convoc. N. fol. 36. b.

[f] *Three Articles of the* 36*th Canon.*

I. That the King's Majesty under God is the only supreme governour of this realm, and of all other his Highness's dominions and countrys, as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes, as temporal; and that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, preeminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within his Majesty's said realms, dominions, and countrys.

II. That the Book of Common Prayer, and of Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, containeth in it nothing contrary to the word of God, and that it may lawfully so be used, and that I myself will use the form in the said book prescribed in publick prayer, and administration of the Sacraments, and none other.

III. That I allow the book of Articles of Religion agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces and the whole Clergy in the Convocation holden at *London* in the year of our

subscribo.—Præsentationis etiam in Domo Congregationis coram Domino Pro-Cancellario et Procuratoribus solennis formula hæc adhibetor—Præsento vobis hunc meum B. vel S. ut admittatur &c. ad quam quidem admissionem scio eum aptum habilem et idoneum moribus ei Scientia. Quem insuper scio legisse vel ab alio recitatos audivisse omnes Articulos quibus coram procuratoribus subscripsit." *Reg. Convoc. N. fol.* 41. *a et b.*

§. 2.

The Case of Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, required of all Scholars matriculated in the University of Oxford, stated and considered.

THE two Universities were instituted as places of education for the youth of this kingdom, to qualify them for the service of their country, in Church and State, as by law established.

The nature and design of their institution, the Statutes which are founded upon it, and the established modes of discipline to be observed in them, do evidently prove, that they were intended only for the education of members of the Church of England.

That no papist, or sectary of any kind, might gain an admission into this University, the wisdom

Lord God one thousand five hundred sixty and two; and that I acknowledge all and every the Articles therein contained, being in number nine and thirty, besides the Ratification, to be agreeable to the word of God.

of our Protestant ancestors thought it expedient, for the greater security of this reformed Church as by law established, to provide a test of the religious principles of the persons to be admitted into it.

This test, which has been required and submitted to for near two hundred years, consists in a Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, which contain the doctrines of the Church of England.

If it be *abrogated*, the constitution, order, and discipline of the University will be fundamentally changed. It will be laid open to persons of all religious persuasions, who will be at liberty to act agreeably to their persuasions, so far at least as they can plead conscience in their behalf. If any one cannot conscientiously join in the service of the Church, he will say, that it would be wicked in *him* to violate his conscience, and in *you* to require it. Thus the University will become a seminary of schism, which it was designed to prevent; and will put arms into the hands of persons, who will use them offensively against the Established Church, which their institution requires them to guard and defend.

No man of common sense can think, that a subscription to the Articles required of persons who have attained the twelfth year of their age, can be meant to require a formal and explicit assent to the sense of the doctrines contained in them, when they are not so much as required to have read them; or that it carries in it an obligation that they should never dissent from any of them, should they hereafter see reason for it, when they should have

abilities to understand and judge of them. It never meant any more, nor was it ever understood to mean any more, than that it was a declaration of the person subscribing, that he was a member of the Church of England, and, as such, would conform to the worship and discipline of it. All that he is supposed to know of the doctrines is, that they are the doctrines of the Church, of which he has been educated a member; and that for the present, he acquiesces in them as such, suspending any farther judgment of them, till he shall be better able to examine them.

All this the matriculated youth may very well understand, and submit to with a safe conscience; it requiring no more than a persuasion, which he certainly brings with him, that the Church he has been educated in has no design to impose upon him, or lead him astray.

Those indeed, who are capable of Degrees, are supposed to have read the Articles, and to understand the doctrines of them. And if any one thinks that any of them are not reconcileable, by a fair and reasonable interpretation, to the essential faith of a Christian, though he may be an outward conformist, he is, in truth, no real member of the Church of England as by law established.

But what end will this abrogation answer? The attack upon the University Subscription, is an attack only upon the outworks of the fortress of the Church; if these are gained, will not the acquisition encourage a more furious attack upon the citadel? If the Church of England stands at present upon a

good foundation, let it be vigorously defended by all who consider it as the bulwark of the Reformation; and let us hope, that our superiors will be careful that no alterations be made in it, if any alterations are expedient, but such as will give it an additional and real security, strength, and reputation, leaving it in possession of the essential doctrines and constitution of a truly primitive, Christian, and Apostolical Church.

§. 3.

Considerations on the expediency of making some alteration in regard to the present mode of Subscribing to the XXXIX Articles in this University.

THERE is no occasion to inquire into the original design of the institution of the Universities: it is sufficient for our purpose to know, that the present mode of Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles was injoined by an University Statute, made at the instance of our Chancellor, Lord Leicester.

It is agreed, that this University was intended, by the said Statute, as a seminary not of learning only, but also of the Protestant religion, as by law established.

It is also agreed, that some test is necessary from persons entering as members of the same; since their religious opinions cannot be matter of indifference to the well-being of such a seminary.

The present test is Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles: and this test, it is acknowledged, has been required and submitted to for near two hundred years.

I will go farther, and add, that I wish it might have continued without impeachment for many hundred years more.

But supposing any untoward and unexpected emergency to arise; is this test, in its present identical form, to be necessarily and uniformly retained, without limitation or alteration, in all times, and under all circumstances whatsoever? So say some, and here we must part.

The *abrogation* of a test, to be required of persons matriculated, is out of the question; the alteration of it is all that is here insisted on; and *even this only in consideration of the powerful spirit of opposition to the present mode of Subscription.* This spirit it is not in our power to control, we have nothing to do therefore but to blunt its edge by prudent anticipation.

At the time when the late Petition met with its deserved repulse in the House of Commons, the friends of this University immediately expressed their wishes, that some alteration might be adopted, respecting the business of Subscription to Articles: our best friends think some alterations safe and practicable, and further are well assured, that unless we voluntarily comply, *we shall be compelled to submit.*

I wish these apprehensions were ill-founded: it is a good maxim, *Noli quieta turbare:* but the signal is

already given, and the cry for alteration is gone forth; the question is, whether we choose to capitulate, or to surrender at discretion.

I tremble at the consequences of an obstinate perseverance in the received form: as by an ill-judged firmness we may oblige our superiors not only to exempt old as well as young from Subscription, but to leave nothing to be subscribed by either in the way of substitution.

Oxford, March 19, 1772.

§. 4.

THE design of the author of *the Case of Subscription,* &c. was to vindicate the establishment and continuance of the present mode of Subscription. He had reason to suppose, that persons abroad did not see the thing in its true light. He endeavoured to represent it in such a one, as might not only skreen the University from the reproach of an absurd and arbitrary conduct, in requiring from young people a formal assent to the truth of propositions which they knew it was impossible for them to understand; but to undeceive those who might think, without further reflection, that we required such an assent. He knows his attempt has satisfied some reasonable and respectable men, who are friends to the University. He never expected it would satisfy its enemies.

The attack upon our Subscription took its rise from that which was made upon the whole body of the Articles. The Church of England was not to be taken by *storm;* our adversaries have a mind to see what they can do by *sap*. They are first to get the University to acknowledge, that they have been very wrong in requiring from young persons, at their Matriculation, an *acquiescence* in, for I can never call it an *assent* to, the doctrines of the Church, into the faith of which they were *baptized*. This will not satisfy. The next step will be, to exempt all, who are to take Degrees, from the obligation to subscribe the Articles, except perhaps, for the present, Degrees in Divinity; by which means, persons of any or no religion may have a claim to the honours of the University, in direct contradiction to the nature of its institution, and all the principles of its polity. The sense of the University will afterwards be brought as an argument for totally abolishing a Subscription, which they have acknowledged to be indefensible, as intolerable to the consciences of *many;* and therefore is a grievance that ought to be removed from the consciences of *all* who feel the weight of it. This chain of consequences is not improbable, if we consider the principles and designs of our Reformers.

But what shall we do with the oath of supremacy, which an Act of Parliament obliges *many* persons in this place to take at the age of eighteen years, as the University Statute does *all* at the age of sixteen years? This has a powerful sanction, and I suppose we do not intend to alter it. And yet I

apprehend, that the *Oath* stands in need of the same grains of allowance as the *Subscription*. The young people, who are obliged to take it, *swear* against the Pope's supremacy, in all matters *ecclesiastical and spiritual*, without knowing any thing more about it than they do of the Articles.

§. 5.

THE sedate author of *Considerations on the expediency of making some alteration*, &c. seems to found his arguments upon false principles. His fears make him forget what ground he treads upon. "He trembles *at*" things which *are not*, namely, "consequences." He sounds a retreat, before he sees the face of an enemy. He flies, before any man is ready to pursue; and that with such thoughtless precipitation, as to leave reason far behind him; and neither to know, poor man! wherefore, nor whither, he is running.

"The pregnant principle of necessity" is in truth pregnant with nothing else but mischief: it is oftentimes imaginary or fictitious: it is always the arbitrary *substitute* of *right*, and derives all its force from *power:* it is deservedly excluded from every other but "*political* controversy," and is unquestionably the worst of answers that a Protestant could make ~~to the pretended plea of priority of right, or "the popish petition of grievances."~~

If many "friends of the University have expressed their wishes, that some alteration might be

adopted ;" and " those wishes are still pressed upon us from every quarter," it is surprising, that many persons resident in this University, whose ears and eyes are open to public occurrences, should never, before their reading of these Considerations, have received the information. Suppose, however, the truth of these *gratis dicta:* and what anticipation in our part can be " *prudent*" enough to stop the progress or assuage the fury " of this powerful spirit of opposition ?" Can the wary and provident author of *Considerations* imagine, that, contrary to the experience of ancient and modern times, the " spirit of faction" can be appeased by moderate " *concessions?*" That the " persevering temper of a disappointed party" will voluntarily desist, before the *dominion of grace* is a second time established in the *ruin of ordinances;* and the spirit of faction, *strengthened* by concessions, is become superior to all control ?

The writer of Considerations is a person of very extraordinary intelligence. He receives important informations by private whispers ; and thinks too, that by a peculiar faculty of discernment he knows the opinions of other men, better than themselves do. Courage, dear Sir, and pluck up your drooping spirits. Pray a little Christian patience and manly resolution ; and rather let us be deserted by all our whispering friends, than ourselves fly from our advantage-ground, and basely desert our appointed station. Consider, Sir, what great and unforeseen advantages have sometimes accrued from " firmness" and perseverance. So long as our pre-

sent "ground is tenable"' let us not wilfully abandon it to any pert invader. "The torrent" may possibly be diverted from its present course; or it may in time subside, if we prudently *support* our "fences:" but it surely is not the season for tampering with the fences, while the waters rage.

By the Constitutions and approved practice of the Church, *infants* enter into the Christian covenant, though incapable of understanding or knowing the conditions of it. You will say, perhaps, these infants have their *sponsors*, and the young *Matriculate* ought to have his. Be it so. If you think the security insufficient, add, if you please, that of bondsmen to his personal obligations. He is of age to answer, in some measure at least, for himself. For no person gains admission here, who is not arrived at *some degree of understanding*, few that are *unlearned*. Let those whom it concerns instruct each candidate for Matriculation to the *extent* of his capacity.—Without controversy, this University, by its institution, or rather by its constitution, is a place of education for *none* but members of the Church of England. Conformity to the worship and Articles of the Church is indispensably enjoined by her Statutes. This is known to all. Such persons, as knowing her conditions approve of them, and will *subscribe* in testimony of their approbation, will find a welcome reception. Persons of a different persuasion, persons who cannot with a good conscience subscribe, may have recourse to other learned seminaries, whose constitution is more conformable to their tenets and inclinations.

But why, the *Considerer* may ask, should not the Declaration so much spoken of be deemed sufficient, without Subscription? For many reasons: because, for instance, unwritten words are transient and unstable: an oral declaration may be equivocal: it may soon become, alas! matter of mere form: through inattention, or through some evil principle, it may be wholly neglected: it may be made unadvisedly: it may be treated by many as of little obligation. On the contrary, *Litera scripta* MANET. Formal Subscription to determinate propositions precludes *equivocation:* an oral declaration oftentimes passes for nothing with thoughtless or unprincipled men, but a manual signature is too precise a testimony of a deliberate act to be *lightly regarded.*

Why should we abandon ourselves to despondency, as if our enemies were mighty and our friends unfaithful? why should we not hope for good from the mildness and justice of our governing superiors, from whom we deserve the best of treatment? But if this University must *now* be the *only* object of *persecution* in the British dominions, and if "the cry which is gone out" against us must prevail, it were better for us to fall by the hand of another than by our own.

Oxford, March 27, 1772.

§. 6.

THE Author of *the Case*, &c. would not have presumed to have troubled his readers with any thing more about the Subscription, had he not thought the credit and honour of the University particularly concerned in having right notions ascertained as to the meaning and intention of the present mode of Subscription. The writer of the *Considerations* having over and over again insisted upon an indefensible state of the Case, he thought himself under a necessity of appearing in print once more, and for the last time.

He has expressly charged the governors of the University, for near two hundred years past, down to this very day, with having required from young persons, at their Matriculation, a *formal assent to the truth of a variety of propositions of profound argument, and of a mixed nature, historical, theological, and metaphysical,* which they knew it was impossible for them to understand. And yet he is so indulgent as to wish, *that this practice might have continued without impeachment for many hundred years more.* Now on the contrary, I do aver, that if this had been their intention, they have all along been the most unreasonable, absurd, and iniquitous set of governors that ever lived; and the practice ought not to have obtained for a single day.

After this preamble, may I be permitted to make a few very short strictures upon some paragraphs of the last paper.

There is no chicanery in making a Subscription, according to the intention of the imposers. Whether the *author of the Case*, or the *Considerer*, has rightly represented that intention, is left to the judgment of others. I know no law of the land which interferes in this matter. I know that all laws are to be interpreted according to the intention of their makers.

The account lately published of the origin of the Subscription, might have saved the *Considerer* this paragraph. Tutors are directed, even by the Statute itself, *Tit.* iii. 2. to be very careful to instruct their pupils in the sense of the Articles, before they take their Degrees. This shews they were not supposed to have been sufficiently, if at all, instructed in them, when they came to the University. And there is a very observable difference in the form of Subscription. The Candidate for a Degree declares solemnly, and subscribes to the declaration, that after having read the Thirty-nine Articles, he finds them *to be all agreeable to the Word of God.* The young person matriculated signs his name in a book to which the Articles are prefixed.

And every Tutor may, I think, satisfy himself, and he ought, in duty, always to satisfy his Pupils, of the real intention and meaning of such Subscription.

§. 7.

A vindication of the test at Matriculation, in its present mode, from the plausible objections that have been raised against it.

It hath been artfully thrown out by the avowed enemies of the Church of *England* as now established, that the Subscription to its Articles required by this University at Matriculation is a scandalous and unjustifiable imposition on mere boys, who cannot in reason be supposed qualified to judge of the sense of them. Many steady friends to the Church and University have been startled at the plea; and thinking it a practice altogether indefensible, are therefore, in the true and candid spirit of the Church of *England*, zealous for the alteration of it. But before we allow the charge, let us see whether it doth not rest on a mere mistake. The wisdom of ages ought not in justice to give way suddenly to every seeming difficulty.

All the arguments hitherto urged in favour of an alteration of the present mode of test at Matriculation, depend on a supposition, that by this Subscription the University requires an actual positive assent to the truth of the doctrines contained in the Thirty-nine Articles.

If this were really the case, the objections are unanswerable, and a test of another kind ought to be substituted in its room. But if it appear that no such assent either is, or ever was, intended to be

required by the University, then the present mode is not affected by any arguments yet urged against it.

I presume it will be universally granted, that in whatever sense the University requires this Subscription, in that sense, and no other, the Subscription is made.

From the manner of proceeding at the admission of a Scholar, we may fairly collect in what sense the University actually does, and always did, consider it. The Scholar before he is admitted is required to subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles, but simply, without any formula expressive of *assent* to the truth of the doctrines contained in them. He is not even required to have read them. And his Tutor is enjoined by Statute to instruct him in the sense of them, Tit. III. §. 2. "*Tutor verò Scholares Tutelæ et Regimini suo commissos probis Moribus imbuat, et in probatis Authoribus instituat; et maximè in Rudimentis Religionis et Doctrinæ Articulis in Synodo Lond.* (*Anno* 1562) *editis: ac pro virili suo Disciplinæ in Ecclesiâ Anglicanâ publicè receptæ eos conformes præstabit.*"

This last circumstance proves to a demonstration that the University does not suppose the Scholar already fully informed in the meaning of the Articles, and therefore cannot be supposed to require a full and entire assent to what it owns it does not imagine him to comprehend.

And if this Subscription does not imply an entire assent to the truth of every proposition contained in the Articles, it can necessarily imply no assent at

all. For to say that it is an assent as far as the Scholar understands them, is to make it no test, unless an acquiescence in the rest which he does not understand be also implied. And if an acquiescence be allowed sufficient for a part, it is equally so for the whole. There is therefore no medium; this Subscription must either mean an entire assent, or merely an acquiescence. That it cannot mean an entire assent is already proved; *an acquiescence then is all that is, or ever was, intended.*

It may be asked, what right the University has to understand Subscription, in this instance, in a different sense from what it is allowed by general consent, and by the University itself, to have in every other instance. Is not this a dangerous doctrine, full of chicane and double dealing, and subversive of all Subscription to any good purpose? By those who ask these questions it is taken for granted, that a bare Subscription, of necessity can imply no less than an entire assent to what is so subscribed. Now this is certainly not true. I might instance in affairs of common negociation in civil matters. But it will be sufficient to the present purpose to show, that there is no instance in which the Thirty-nine Articles are subscribed where an assent is intended to be required, but when that assent is expressed in terms, and not supposed to follow from the mere Subscription.

How is it in the University? When the matriculated Scholar becomes a candidate for a degree, he is again required to subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles; and moreover the three Articles of the

36th Canon, which include an allowance of the Thirty-nine Articles, and an acknowledgment that they are agreeable to the word of God.

And this Subscription was[e] originally made, not simply, but in the following form: "*Ego A. perlectis prius vel ab alio corâm me recitatis Orthodoxæ Fidei et Religionis Articulis XXXIX in sacrâ Synodo Lond. habitâ A. D.* 1562 *constabilitis; simulque tribus Capitibus in aliâ Synodo Londinensi sub Annum* 1604 *decretis et in Canone* 36*to redactis sciens volensque ex animo subscribo.*" And the person who presents is also required to attest that the Candidate hath read, or heard read, the Articles to which he hath subscribed. In this case the University certainly intends to require a full and entire assent; and has a good right to do it, having before provided proper means of instruction. The assent is clearly expressed; and all possible caution taken that it may not be given in a thoughtless and precipitate manner.

Whenever an *assent* to the Articles is intended to be required, it is always expressed.

By the simple Subscription of Matriculation the University can understand nothing but a mere acquiescence.

An acquiescence is the least security the University

[e] This formula was decreed by Convocation in the year 1616, but not incorporated into the present body of Statutes. And indeed it would be superfluous, as the three Articles of the 36th Canon are in a declaratory form, and amount to the same thing. These Articles are not only subscribed, but actually read by the Candidate, at the time of his presentation.

as a seminary for the Church of England can possibly require; and such a test cannot be a burthen to the conscience of any who take it; and can exclude none but such as it is the duty of the University to exclude.

It is further evident, that by so understanding it the University does not adopt a singular or unwarranted notion of Subscription, or by any means countenance the subscribing in various lax and indeterminate senses, where an assent is required.

Oxford, April 3, 1772.

§. 8.

The affair of the Subscription has been much agitated. I have considered what has been said on all sides; and I hope it will not be thought impertinent, if I state the case according to my notions of the debate, without presuming to direct the judgment of others.

The following positions strongly oppose any projected alteration.

The University has a *prescriptive right* to the present mode of Subscription, having exercised it for near two hundred years.

It cannot be presumed, that so learned a body would have instituted and continued a practice, *unwarrantable, arbitrary, and absurd.*

The only construction that can make it otherwise is, that they had no farther intention in requiring a

Subscription to the Articles from young persons at their Matriculation, than that they should declare their *acquiescence* in the doctrines of the Church of England, which all the members of it, of whatever degree, who do not give *any formal or explicit assent* to them, are supposed to *acquiesce* in.

This their *intention* has been made to appear so fully, that there cannot remain any reasonable doubt about it.

There have been no evil suspicions, no uneasiness in this place, arising from the continuance of the practice. It has generally been looked upon as a proper method to secure the Church of England, which the nature of our constitution requires us to guard.

Any alteration of the practice might seem to carry in it a reflection upon the wisdom and piety of our predecessors, for having *established* it, and an acknowledgment of the want of them in ourselves, for having *continued* it.

It may be apprehended, that such a supposed acknowledgment may operate so as to affect very materially the Articles of our Church, there being too much reason to think, that the outcry against the University Subscription arises more from a dislike to the Articles themselves, than from a tender concern for the consciences of our youth.

Under favour, I will presume to put the following questions:

Have the objectors to Subscription so far considered the matter, as to form to themselves just and adequate notions of the *intention* of the Uni-

versity? Did they not, without farther reflection, take for granted, that the Subscription implied a *positive assent* to the truth of the doctrines contained in the Articles? Must they not be convinced upon mature consideration, and upon the evidence produced in the case, that the University never required any such thing? Can they blame the University for retaining the ancient test, till stronger reasons are produced for the alteration of it, than have yet been laid before them? Ought they to be required to make innovations, merely in compliance with the temper of the times, when they may be thought incompatible with their duty, and productive of worse consequences than they are intended to prevent?

I own myself to be under no panic at having the matter brought into Parliament. We shall have an opportunity given us of making our plea more public; and should it not be approved, which is a supposition I am not willing to make, what have we to apprehend? I cannot believe that the majority of either House will ever concur in any project to weaken the *fences* of our Ecclesiastical constitution, till they mean to alter it in its *fundamentals*. When that day comes, the University must fall with the Church.

§. 9.

THE defence of the present mode of Subscription rests upon one clear point, plain and intelligible to all capacities.

Every true member of the Church of England is supposed to acquiesce in the doctrines of it upon this principle, that he *believes* it does not maintain any doctrines contrary to the Christian faith into which he has been baptized, whether he understands them or not. The University requires a Subscription to these doctrines from all Scholars at their Matriculation, as a test they are actual members of the Church of England, the constitution of the University requiring them to admit *no other*. It requires this Subscription, not as a positive assent, upon *real knowledge and conviction*, to the truth of the doctrines, but as an *acquiescence in them*, or, in other words, *as a declaration that they are persuaded, and have no suspicions to the contrary, that the Church, of which they declare themselves to be members, does not maintain any false doctrines contrary to the true faith of a Christian.* It has been proved beyond contradiction, that the University requires nothing more.

That the University has a right to require this Subscription, may be shewn by the authority of the legislature itself, which in the *oath of supremacy* proceeds upon the same grounds. Suppose this oath to require no more than a bare renunciation of the Pope's authority, yet this must be supposed to

be made, for the most part at least, upon the evidence of *faith*, not of *knowledge;* as it is required from all Scholars upon foundations of eighteen years of age; very few of whom can possibly know the insufficiency of the grounds of a claim admitted by one half of Christendom. But, in truth, the oath has always been understood by the legislature to imply *the supremacy of the King in all matters ecclesiastical and spiritual;* a claim erected upon the downfall of the Pope's usurpation. And can the young people who are required to take this oath be supposed to know, with any degree of precision, *what this supremacy is*, upon what *right* it is established, and in what *manner and cases* it is to be exercised? Certainly not. And yet they are obliged by a law made 25 Charles II. and confirmed so lately as 9 Geo. II. to receive this doctrine, and to acknowledge it upon oath. Upon what motives? Evidently upon the *credit* given to the Reformation, and upon a *presumption*, that the legislature did very right in acting upon the principles of it, by requiring a renunciation of the Pope's, and an acknowledgment of the King's, supremacy.

With what consistency then, and *upon what motives*, can the legislature abrogate the University-Subscription, and retain the strongest of all declarations and obligations, precisely under the same circumstances. The University itself surely ought not to do it: it will imply a condemnation of a long-established practice; will throw an invidious imputation upon the memory of those whom we ought to revere, and bring the reproach of having

continued an unwarrantable practice upon ourselves. And for what reason? Merely to humour the sceptical notions and projects of the times; and so to bring a suspicion upon the doctrines of the Church of England, and to make an opening for a stronger attack upon them, which may end in the destruction of our present establishment; and all this, under pretence of *relieving* consciences which are not *aggrieved*.

April 22, 1772.

§. 10.

The first question you propose to me is, in what sense I apprehend your Convocation to have enacted, that all Scholars to be matriculated, having arrived at the age of twelve years, shall subscribe to the Articles of Religion: it being, as you observe, presumed and agreed on all hands, that the intention of the imposers is the true measure of the sense of the Subscription.

Now I presume Subscription to any proposition must, in its plainest and most obvious sense, imply a declaration, that the Subscriber apprehends that the said proposition is true, just as Subscription to a promissory note implies a declaration that he will perform the promise: the Subscription having in both cases the same moral meaning and obligation as would have arisen from his uttering the words subscribed; this artificial method being substituted in the room of the natural one for the sake of legal evidence and notoriety. Upon what *grounds* the Subscriber apprehends the proposition to be true, I think his bare Subscription does not determine, any more than his oral declaration would have done. This remains to be collected from the matter of the proposition, and the situation and capacity of the Subscriber, jointly considered. Some propositions are knowable to the greater part of mankind only on testimony and authority; others on their own personal examination and conviction. It will happen therefore continually, that the same proposition

may to you be the object of knowledge, and to me only the object of belief; and yet my inward assent to it may equally influence my practice; and my public declaration of this assent may induce the same moral obligations, and equally answer the purposes of society. Of this it were easy to give examples. I conclude therefore, that Subscription in its primary meaning implies an *assent* to the truth of the proposition subscribed; and that this assent will be either an assent of *belief*, founded on testimony and authority, or an assent of *knowledge*, founded on personal examination and conviction, as the case may happen.

This appears to be the natural meaning and obligation of Subscription, supposing it not to be limited by the intention of the imposer either expressed or implied. But it is possible he may on some occasions find reason to modify it: a less obligation may perhaps equally answer the salutary end he has in view; and a wise and good legislator will no farther impose general rules of action or tests of opinion, than human infirmity renders conducive to the good order and happiness of society. He may therefore find it sufficient that the Subscriber should declare, that whatever may happen to be his private sentiments touching the proposition which is laid before him, he will not publicly maintain or utter any thing contrary thereto. Hence it will follow, that though Subscription in its natural and primary meaning implies an assent to the truth of the proposition subscribed, yet nothing hinders but that in its legal and se-

condary one it may signify only a declaration of neutrality and a promise of silence. And this different acceptation of Subscription divines have aptly enough expressed, when, applying it to the case of the Articles of the Church of England, they have debated whether they were to be considered as Articles of *doctrine* or as Articles of *peace*.

We come now to apply these considerations to the matter in hand. It is evident that the imposers have not declared the sense in which they direct the Subscription to be taken. The enacting clause runs simply, *Articulis Fidei et Religionis subscribant*. I think then, in the first place, your Convocation did not intend a bare declaration of neutrality and promise of silence. It remains that they intended a declaration of assent. I think, secondly, they did not intend an assent of knowledge; for this plain reason, because the Subscriber is utterly incapable of such assent. That he is so, seems to be a point agreed on all hands; those who object to this particular Subscription suppose it as the very ground of their objection; and those who defend the Subscription do not deny it. Indeed that a child of twelve years of age should on his own personal examination and conviction assent to the truth of a system of propositions, many of which had for several centuries more or less exercised some of the ablest pens in Christendom, is a supposition so manifestly absurd, that I think no man of candour (unless in a moment of great inadvertency) will charge it upon any body of men.

How far your Convocation were from entertaining such a supposition may be collected from hence, that they enjoin the Tutor, as a principal part of his duty, to instruct the Scholars committed to his care in the Articles of Religion; a plain intimation that they did not conceive them to have already subscribed to these Articles upon personal examination and conviction. I conclude, therefore, that your Convocation intended an assent of belief, an assent founded on testimony and authority. The plain meaning then of the Subscription they require will be this; the Subscriber declares, "that he believes, upon the authority of his instructors, the doctrines of the Church of England to be true, or agreeable to the word of God:" by which declaration he virtually professes himself to be a member of the said Church.

The second question you are pleased to propose to me is, whether I apprehend the present statutable Subscription to be liable to any just exception.

I am to take for granted, Sir, as your question implies, that *some* subscription or declaration is reasonable and necessary. And of this indeed I have no doubt. The two Universities have ever been considered as seminaries of the Established Church: the whole tenour of your Academical and Collegiate discipline, and the general course of your institution, render it absolutely impossible for young persons of a different persuasion, to be received into your Colleges and educated among you with any propriety or advantage. I wish well to toleration as sincerely as I am attached to the Establishment;

because both are essential to the true interests of religion, to the good order of society, and to the natural rights of mankind: but as to any *scheme of comprehension*, I have ever considered it as a fatal experiment, which would infallibly terminate in the destruction of the one or the other. Men may differ in opinion, even upon points which they esteem essential, and yet live well together as good Christians and good citizens; but it requires little insight into the human heart, and a very moderate acquaintance with history, to conjecture what would be the consequence of assembling them, under these circumstances, in one school of learning or in one house of worship. I will suppose then some test at Matriculation to be indispensably necessary: we are to consider the propriety of that which is established at present. I will offer you my sentiments with great freedom.

I take your present Subscription, in the sense in which I understand it, to be unexceptionable. I cannot see why a young person may not as reasonably, upon the sole authority of his instructors, declare his assent to the Thirty-nine Articles as to any other system of religious doctrine or political opinions. And yet he has been taught fromhis infancy, upon the same authority, to make a solemn profession of his belief in the daily service of the Church; and has been lately, or will soon be, called upon to repeat it in a manner as explicit and formal as any Subscription can amount to, I mean in the office of Confirmation. But these, you will say, are *general* articles of belief, and such as lie within

the reach of his inquiry. That they are more general than the Articles in question, I will allow; but that they all lie within the reach of his inquiry, and that he can assent to them upon his own personal examination and conviction, is by no means so clear. At this early period he is obliged to take even the evidences of the truth of his religion chiefly upon the authority of his instructors; (and a sufficient ground this, no doubt, for his faith and practice, because it is the best his situation will admit of;) and I will venture to say there are several propositions in the Apostles' Creed, of the truth of which he is no more a competent judge upon the sole footing of his own examination, than he is of the Articles of the Church of England. So far then your Subscription stands upon the same ground with the rites and usages of the Church. At the age of eighteen, whatever be his *condition* and *education*, he may be called upon by the State to take the oath of supremacy; to declare his assent in the most solemn manner to a political and religious position, which, however true, is so far from being self-evident, or deducible from principles within the reach of an unimproved understanding, that it is not at this day in its full extent acknowledged by the one half of Europe. Now, Sir, can you imagine that one young person in ten who is bound to make this declaration can make it upon his own personal examination and conviction? Upon what grounds then but upon authority, upon a general persuasion that those who enjoin it on the one hand, and those who recommend it to him on the other, have duly

examined it, and must judge for him till such time as he can judge for himself. And all this with infinite propriety. For, in truth, there is scarce a circumstance in human life, in which we do not rely implicitly on the judgment of others, before we are in a capacity to form our own. As the understanding opens and improves, we every day depend more on reason and less on authority: we try by the one the sentiments we had found it necessary to embrace on the other: and thus a variety of propositions to which we had formerly given an assent of belief, are upon mature consideration either finally rejected, or obtain an assent of knowledge. If in the mean time the exigencies of society require an explicit declaration of our sentiments, I see no possible inconvenience in declaring them on the grounds whereon we have embraced them. If, for instance, the wisdom of government determine it to be conducive to the public security, that I should declare my assent or dissent to a political position at eighteen, I see no reason why I may not do it as sincerely at that age agreeably to the light that is before me, as I shall afterwards with better light at eight and twenty; why I may not with as clear a conscience abjure the pope upon the best account of his pretensions I can obtain from my instructors in the one case, as I can upon a full view of the matter and the evidence of Scripture, history, and common sense, in the other. In like manner, if it be conducive to good order in the Church, or to the peace of society, that I should make a profession of my Christian faith, or a declaration on the doc-

trines of a particular Church, at an age wherein I can do neither on my own personal examination, why may I not publish those sentiments which I have undoubtedly embraced on the testimony and authority of others? My sincerity depends not, in any of these cases, on the nature or strength of my assent: if I form my judgment upon the best information in my power, I do every thing I owe to myself; if I obey the requisition of my superiors, and declare this judgment, I do my duty to society. It seems therefore necessary to conclude, that, if the meaning of your Subscription has been truly stated, it is liable to no reasonable objection.

APPENDIX.

The Debate on Sir William Meredith's Motion, to put an end to Subscription upon Matriculation at the Universities.

On February 23, 1773, at half-past three, the order of the day was called for, and Sir William Meredith rose to submit his motion relative to "the Subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles, or any other test which may be required of persons at Matriculation at either of the Universities."

Sir Roger Newdigate (one of the Members for the University of Oxford) opposed the motion. He said, that he thought the question had been finally disposed of last year, (Feb. 1772,) when the Hon. Baronet had failed in his endeavour to put an end to clerical Subscriptions. The House had sufficiently manifested its judgment upon that occasion, when the Hon. Baronet's motion was lost by a majority of 217 to 71. The present question was virtually involved in that, and came incidentally into discussion at that time: but now it was again brought into the House by way of a second experiment. The object was the same in all these motions—it was to undermine the Church by sapping the foundations of the Universities. The object of the motion was clearly to set open the doors of the Church to Dissenters.

Mr. Welbore Ellis was decidedly against the motion of the Hon. Baronet. The several statutes have given to

the Universities powers and privileges. They possess the power to make such regulations for their own government, as may appear to the wisdom and experience of Convocation best adapted to the ends of their institutions. I proceed to declare, that calling on the Legislature to control by Act of Parliament the conduct and consciences of Members of Convocation, is a mode of proceeding which I must be permitted to call unjust and injudicious, and so deserving of censure, that I shall vote against it.

Mr. Dowdeswell could not agree with the last speaker, that the University regulation respecting Subscriptions had a tendency to produce national good; a boy of sixteen could not understand the scholastic subtleties of the Articles.

Mr. W. Ellis rose again. He said, that the two great seminaries of learning, Oxford and Cambridge, were instituted for the instruction of youth in sound learning, and the promotion and protection of the established national religion. Now, Sir, as religion should ever go hand in hand with learning, the youth of Oxford (for it is to that University I confine my observations) make their first entrance upon their academic career an act of religion in a certain sense, namely, by the profession of a general assent to the doctrines and discipline of the Church in which they were bred. But then the Hon. Gentleman has said, that these young men do not understand the Articles. Perhaps not in their depths; but it may be said of them as it has been said of Scripture, that there are parts so deep that the elephant may swim in them, and parts so fordable that the lamb may pass through them. Besides, are there not Professors, Tutors, and Lecturers, to expound and explain and prove them. If, after subscribing the Articles, the young Student is to be instructed in them, the statute which enjoins this sufficiently shews the sense of the

University on this head, and justifies me in supposing, that the act of subscribing the Articles is like the act of repeating the Creed, or saying the Catechism; these formularies are learned before the child is able to give an account of all the mysterious or even manifest truths contained in them; and yet I hope that no Gentleman in this House will argue against the utility of teaching them, although the credenda in them be as yet above their capacities. Subscription to the Articles is a bare assent to those truths which the Church has made the tests of Church membership, and in which they are to be farther and still farther instructed as their years increase. This matter ought to be left to the judgment of that body, which has for ages acquitted itself for the public good, and to the satisfaction of the state. But, Sir, I will go farther. What were the great ends proposed by Founders and Benefactors, for the guidance of their judgments and the determination of their munificence? Were not those noble institutions intended to assist in the great work of national edification, in the building up the youth of the country in the national faith as established by law? Did they not design to make the Universities fruitful parents of attached and faithful sons of the Church as well as of themselves? Can it be supposed agreeable to the spirits of those Benefactors, that the Universities should adopt a numerous offspring differing in principle, in sentiment and opinion, from their pious parents? No, Sir: such was never the intention of Founders and Benefactors; it is monstrous to suppose so. Their design was to make the Universities the guardians of the national faith; and those who wished to share her benefits and patronage, are required, as a proof of uniformity with her in religious sentiments, to subscribe the Articles of their common Church. And then with respect to youths not intended for holy orders—is it not the duty of parents as well as of the Universities, to give every possible furtherance to those means and methods whereby young

men may become attached to the established faith and worship, since their civil liberties and worldly happiness essentially depend upon the existence and support of the ecclesiastical system? Both for the good of individuals, as well as for public good, I insist that the tests in question are necessary; and since Oxford has, now for above 200 years, been in the habit of applying them; since during that time she has flourished and abounded in every branch of literature and science; since to these methods we are much beholden for the honour, and morals, and religious peace of the country, I am against the interference of the Legislature.

Mr. GREY objected to these tests, because they excluded a multitude of Dissenters of every denomination. I abhor such contracted notions. As to speculative matters in religion, they are by no means material. The Articles are the offspring of monkish enthusiasm, a jumble of contradiction; away with such fanatical stuff; we live in more enlightened times. If Oxford consider herself worthy of taking care of our youth, let her relax from her discipline; if she does not, let us compel her to lay aside those barriers, which exclude so many of the youth of the country.

Mr. CORNWALL said, that the reasons which weighed with the last speaker to support the motion of the Hon. Bart. determined him to oppose it. I think, that if the Subscriptions required operate as barriers against the admission of Dissenters, they ought to be maintained; this was, in point of fact, their great end and purpose. I am for toleration, but not for admitting into the Universities those who will be sure to prove enemies to the Church, and so much the more powerful, by reason of their academic education.

Mr. Fox said, that he rejoiced to find that they were at last getting into the debate, from which he was afraid they were departing. The question before the House is simply whether it be expedient for the legislature to interpose in an affair of this sort. A Right Hon. Gentleman, Mr. Welbore Ellis, had said upon this matter of Subscription at Matriculation, "that it is only subscribing to what the young men are hereafter to be instructed in, and means no more than the repetition of the Creed." I affirm, Sir, said Mr. Fox, that both the repetition of the Creed, as well as the Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, are solemn things. This Subscription is no other than a serious attestation of the truth of propositions, not a syllable of which the subscribing youth can understand. Why attest the truth of that, of which a person is ignorant? Is not this to teach prevarication? I do not relish the Hon. Gentleman's doctrine; I think it has a dangerous tendency, and I shall vote for the Speaker leaving the chair, that we may discuss the vast importance of the question before us.

Mr. Fuller was in favour of the Speaker's leaving the chair, and going into Committee upon the question.

A Member (name not given) said, I regret that we did not go into the question last year; the inclination of many in this House was sufficiently known. The Universities took the alarm, but how did they act? Oxford would do nothing; and Cambridge, to save appearances, did what? just as good as nothing[a]; they are still in the days of superstitious darkness. The sun of reformation has arisen,

[a] After Cambridge had changed and accommodated its practice upon admission to Degrees, to suit the wishes of the Latitudinarians, it failed to give satisfaction to the disciples of Blackburne and the Confessional. Blackburne's own son, Jan. 20, 1773, refused to make the modified declaration of "I am bonâ fide a Member of the Church of England."

but we prevent its rays from enlightening our minds. Laud's accursed farrago is to be rammed down the throats of our youth; their necks are still to be burthened with the[b] Calvinistic mill-stone[c] invented by a despicable ecclesiastic. Truth will prevail; a rational system of faith will triumph over the musty relics of monkish[d] spirituality.

Mr. Charles Jenkinson.—A cursory view of past times would have convinced the Hon. Gentleman who spoke last of his gross mistake in accusing Laud as the author or promoter of the academic order to subscribe at Matriculation: it was the appointment of other times as well as other hands. I cannot, however, suffer the name of Laud to be aspersed; he was a great man, great in his munificence, great in his unshaken fidelity to his Sovereign, great in his fortitude in resisting the violence and exposing the errors both of Popery and Puritanism. And let me tell the last Speaker, that nothing is easier for men of brilliant parts, such as those which he himself possesses, so to represent, or rather misrepresent, the points of a question, as to win over to their cause and purpose the ignorant and the prejudiced and the precipitate. Their power is lost if their statements are verified; their sophistry becomes harmless if it be unravelled. How often do we hear all these ordinances called superstitious; and the Articles superstitious; and the Matriculation superstitious. Why, Sir, one and that the principal object of these ordinances, Articles, and practice of Subscription was, to counteract the doctrines and defeat the plans and purposes of monkish superstition. I think I may say, that twenty

[b] Laud was an Arminian, and his downfal may be referred to his opposition to doctrinal as well as disciplinarian Calvinism.

[c] Laud had nothing to do with the appointment of subscribing to the Articles at Matriculation; this was settled in solenni Convocatione, Nov. 14, 1581.

[d] The Articles are specially levelled against monkish spirituality, and all the anti-scriptural inventions of Rome.

out of the thirty-nine Articles are directly or indirectly levelled against the errors of Rome; there may be more. But, Sir, whence arises all this declamation against superstition and bigotry? does it not come out of a spirit of indifference to all religions, and all professions of faith, and all articulate statements of what a man believes and what he does not believe? does it not proceed from the scepticism and infidelity of the age? as if the indifferent, and the sceptic, and the infidel had resolved to combine their operations, and avenge themselves of the zealous, and the assured, and faithful Christian, by clubbing their calumnies, and by a joint contribution of their sarcasms and malignity. Under the notion of religious liberty, the most solemn truths of Christianity are treated with contempt; and those who subscribe to them, or who call upon the youth of the country to do so, are treated as bigots, or menaced as persecutors. Some men are for laying our youth under no restraint. Others go still farther in this loose and liberal age; they argue for the natural excellence of youthful passions, and urge it upon us, in their insidious argument, that they should be left to the bent of their inclinations, without the interference of religious principle, without the intrusion of religious instruction, without the guarding and controlling obligations of a confession of faith, and a declaration of consent to the general truths of Christianity. But, Sir, if the passions be early felt, sad experience proves, that reason is a later inmate of the human heart. A man, who has called himself a philosopher[e], has contended, that man, as he comes into the world, so should he be left to pick up opinions as he goes along the high or the bye-ways of life; to gather his creed, as he would pick up his acquaintance; here a bit of Calvinism; there a point of Arminius; now a rag of Popery; and then a piece of Presbyterian patchwork; and then, again, by

[e] Rousseau.

tacking all these together with shreds and patches from the different infidelities of Hobbes, Collins, Tyndall, Bolinbroke, Hume, and Gibbon, to call it his creed, to make it his god, to fall down and worship it: and this is deemed by the physico-theologians of the day the right method of propagating Gospel truth, and winning the young to its cause. Why, Sir, I should call the man who philosophizes after this fashion, an ingenious madman; and I should not be much disposed to remit any thing of my observation, in respect of those who are for rescuing, as they call it, the youth of the country from the influence of their parents, the tutelage of their Church, and those Christian provisions which are intended by the Universities to secure to God and his Gospel the first fruits of youthful piety, the first vows of the matriculated academic. With respect, therefore, to an exemption from human ties in matters of religion, I am against it. And, Sir, I feel it my duty as a Christian to avow, that opinion much depends upon the first institution of a young man; and every innovation in that, which for ages has been found to answer its purpose, (the great purpose of binding men together in one Lord, one faith, one baptism,) ought to be avoided. The present practice has answered its purpose. Experience supplies the evidence of that fact. Let us go to history, and ask, whence has England derived its knowledge, its superiority in knowledge, in every department of literature? Whence? but from the Universities of the land. And whence, too, has England been supplied with those reams of infidel ribaldry and cargoes of antichristian argument, which have spread mischief and misery around us? Did these come from the Universities? No! they were the effusions of men who might, under the tutelary influence of academic restraints, have been saved from the disgrace of reviling Christian truth, and seeking to poison public opinion. Since then, Sir, the custom of our Universities for ages has answered every end the State could require or expect,

I am not for substituting any other method of Matriculation, and I oppose the Speaker's leaving the chair.

Mr. MONTAGUE.—We have lately had an opportunity of congratulating a Noble Lord opposite, on his election to the Chancellorship of Oxford. I had augured favourably from that appointment, but I fear his Lordship has too much weight with some bodies, and too little with others. As for Subscription to Articles, I think it absurd. I know a noble youth, (the Marquis of Granby,) an heir to all his noble father's virtues, possessed too of infinite genius, and as a classical scholar few surpass him; well, Sir, with all his talents and attainments, I never yet heard that he had troubled himself much about the sub or the supralapsarian errors, upon the omo or the omoi-ousian heresies; and yet, for all his ignorance in these matters, he is an ornament to the nobility of the land. The knowledge of such things is perfectly unnecessary.

Mr. TOWNSEND.—Contrary to my usual course of action, I mean to be neuter on this occasion. The Hon. Gentleman's motion goes too far. And I am not disposed to censure the line of argument of the Gentlemen below me, (Sir Roger Newdigate,) as to the Hume's, Rousseau's, and Bolingbroke's of the day: I have no hesitation in pronouncing them to be the worst pests of society.

Sir William Dolben and Lord North rose together. The Speaker decided for Sir W. Dolben.

Sir WILLIAM DOLBEN.—The question before us seems to be, whether it is at all expedient for this House to interfere in the matter of Subscription. I cannot help thinking, that the present motion of the Hon. Gentleman is connected very closely with that which he lost last year. He then sought to relieve the Feathers' clergymen from

Subscription to the Articles, and now he sets about the same sort of relief for those of whom so many are to become clergymen. The petitioners having failed to gain their end directly, now set about it in this indirect way: the stratagem was clever enough, but not so clever as to escape detection. Sir, we are living in days of alarming character and aspect; and infinitely various are the methods by which truth and its bulwarks are assailed. Sir, when such licentiousness, such sacrilegious as well as anti-Christian attempts are made, I think instead of relaxing, we should keep a stricter hand upon all these academic observances. In these days, things sacred, and the fences and safeguards of things sacred, are made, not the subjects of fair argument, but of abuse, taunt, and mockery. Has not a comedian (Mr. Foote) lately had the effrontery to declare, that he should make a comedy out of every one of the Ten Commandments? If Subscription really were the grievance it was pretended to be, why do such multitudes of foreigners flock to Oxford instead of Cambridge, where there is no Subscription at Matriculation?

Sir RICHARD SUTTON begged to say, that he had studied at Leipsic and Gottingen, and assured the House that there were no Subscriptions there. We had, I remember, at Gottingen, a youth born of heathen parents, though educated in a Christian country. I dare say the thing was done to preserve the breed among us.

Mr. PAGE.—I really, Sir, do not see why we are to be troubled at all upon this matter, merely because some Gentlemen happen to be smitten with a scrap of a pamphlet from the pen of an unknown author.

Lord NORTH.—An Hon. Gentleman, whom it is my happiness to call my friend, (Mr. Montague,) has been pleased to talk about my too great weight in some places,

and my too little weight in others. To this allusion I have to say, that I have been honoured by the University of Oxford above my merits, distinguished as I have just been by the highest dignity which that University has to bestow, and one which the greatest of the nation might well consider their richest reward[e]. Sir, we have heard a great deal about attestations and solemn subscriptions. The friends of the motion, with great adroitness, have endeavoured to put Subscription to the Articles upon the footing with oaths. Now these Gentlemen mistake, or wilfully misrepresent a matter of fact; for, Sir, the Subscription required of youth implies nothing but their bare assent to the Thirty-nine Articles. They barely subscribe their names in token of their being members of a Church which maintains such and such doctrines; this is the intention of the University—this is the right interpretation of the act. But, Sir, if there were any grievance, who are the parties to complain? Certainly the young academics themselves, or their parents or guardians in their name and on their behalf. Have we received any such complaints? Have any remonstrances proceeded from these quarters? None whatever. Who, then, are they who are so loud in their lamentations, so indignant in their protests, so vehement in their declamations? It is easy to guess from what quarter the motion originates—the restless spirits of the day; they, they, Sir, are at the bottom of it. But, Sir, shall we grant now what we resisted before? Shall we permit in one form what we rejected in another? I hope that we are better friends to academic discipline, and our religious establishment—that discipline and establishment which have stood the test of ages, and the trial of much severer assaults than any which this age has levelled against them. We are told, Sir, of reformation. The reforming notions of the age, Sir, are danger-

[e] Lord North had been just elected Chancellor.

ous in their tendency. More than reformation is intended—something that deserves a harsher name—something to which if we give way, adieu to religion, adieu to every thing dear to us as men and Christians.

Sir W. Meredith.—I find that there are men whose consciences can dexterously distinguish between subscribing and verbally assenting to the truth of a thing. I envy not those Gentlemen their talents. An ingenuous mind scorns pitiful evasions. I thank the Noble Lord for his distinctions; they may be of service to the cause of casuistry. The noble Lord says, "that the youth make no complaints." Are they to present themselves at the bar of this House? Who but an honest Member of Parliament, a stranger to the jargon of the schools, can take up their cause? Such a one they have found in me. I am content to be the servant of these little ones, and I have done my best to save them from the oppressive hand of spiritual tyranny.

The debate continued till nine o'clock in the evening, when the House was cleared, the question put, and upon the division the numbers appeared—for the motion, 64; against it, 159.

THE END.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

BY THE SAME EDITOR,

Price Two Shillings,

A LETTER to the Right Hon. the LORD NORTH, Chancellor of the University of Oxford, concerning SUBSCRIPTION to the XXXIX ARTICLES, and particularly the UNDER-GRADUATE SUBSCRIPTION in the University.

By A MEMBER OF CONVOCATION, (generally supposed to be GEORGE HORNE, D. D. the learned President of Magdalen College.)

With a Preface and Notes by the Editor.

1835 AND 1772.

THE

PRESENT ATTACK ON SUBSCRIPTION

COMPARED WITH THE LAST.

1835 AND 1772.

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COMPARED WITH THE LAST,

IN

A LETTER

TO

"A RESIDENT MEMBER OF CONVOCATION,"

OCCASIONED

BY SOME REMARKS

IN HIS

"LETTER TO THE EARL OF RADNOR."

By a Resident Member of Convocation.

O socii (neque enim ignari sumus ante malorum)
O passi graviora; dabit Deus his quoque finem.

OXFORD,

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1835.

SIR,

PERMIT me respectfully to offer to your consideration a few remarks on the concluding pages of your Letter to the Earl of Radnor, in which you refer to "the present proposal for a change in the Subscription of Undergraduates."

I would first request your attention to the charge of "prejudice" which you bring against the opponents of that proposal. You say, "the advocates of the change are making progress. If there is *prejudice*, there is piety too, and candour, and sincere love of truth." (Letter, p. 25.) The charge of prejudice seems explained in the following passage. "Some," you say, "are in dread of some insidious attempt against the great doctrines of Christianity. They think of Arians and Socinians, and imagine a connexion between the present proposal for a change in the Subscription of Undergraduates, and the assault upon Subscription to Articles in all cases whatever in 1772." (p. 18.)

Is there then nothing in the temper of these times to lead men to dread an assault upon all Subscription? is there no similarity in the outward circumstances, under which these two "proposals for a change" have been made? or none in the frame of mind which would yield to them? Those

who think deeply and painfully of the connexion of the present undermining of our system with the open assault in 1772, do not look for Arians and Socinians among the Members of Convocation; they trust that, by God's blessing, the instruction in the Articles which, under the present system, has been imparted, will have been the means of preventing the growth of Socinianism or Arianism amongst us; yet neither can any one doubt, that much of that disputatious, light-minded, indifferent, profane, common-place, self-dependent spirit, in which Arianism and Socinianism took their rise, is now also abroad; that it is the ruling spirit of this present world; that a dislike of every thing which is not palpable to sense, an unwillingness to be bound by any forms, a hatred of being controlled in the free range of human thought, an averseness to believe any thing which the human mind is not allowed to select for itself, and itself set up as the object of its own belief, are among the governing passions of the day: that they are the mainspring of a great portion of the innovations now every where attempted, and that they must, if unchecked, spread a spirit worse, if possible, than Arianism and Socinianism, in every corner of our yet Christian land. We do not look for this spirit in the Members of our own body; but we do look for the same attempts as in 1772 towards a spurious and hollow conciliation; we do dread the same moral cowardice, which magnifies, as it also invites, and even creates, the

pressure from without; we are alarmed at the prospect of an unconscious tampering with it, a yielding to it, a giving way to this "assault upon all Articles" of Faith, and all Doctrines, which comes now, as it did in 1772, from without; and we consider this change in the Subscription of Undergraduates as the first step in a long and ruinous course of concession.

It is, then, as an instance of this yielding spirit, that I must request your attention to the works of one by whom "the present proposal" was first publicly set before Members of Convocation—Dr. Hampden;—not as an individual, but as the representative of a certain character of mind, prevalent in this day as in 1772, which would, in its so-styled charitable judgment of others, and its concessions for the sake of peace, so abstract itself from its own belief, as to leave "truth" nothing else but what a man "troweth," to represent that there is no such things as unchangeable, everlasting, Divine Truth.

You say, there are those among us who "think of Arians and Socinians:" and you seem to regard it as "prejudice." But permit me, Sir, to ask, is this "prejudice?" How can we do otherwise? Have not our thoughts been expressly turned to Arians and Socinians, by Dr. Hampden's "Observations on Religious Dissent?" "In religion, properly so called," says Dr. Hampden, "few Christians, if any, (I speak, of course, of pious minds,) really differ. When I look at the reception by the *Unitarians*, both of the Old and New Testaments,

I cannot, for my part, deny to those who acknowledge this basis of divine facts the name of Christians[a]." Again, "the positive language of the Athanasian might as naturally occasion that of the *Arian*, as the positive language of the *Arian* might occasion that of the Athanasian." Nay further, Dr. Hampden expressly puts the *Unitarian* "on *the same footing precisely of earnest religious zeal and love for the Lord Jesus Christ*, on which" he would place "*any other Christian*[b]." The Unitarian's only fault, it would seem, is, that he dogmatises, "the common fault of us all:" but even "on this ground," says Dr. Hampden, "I am not intending to condemn him more than other Christians: I select his case by way of illustration."

I would not on any account imply, that, because Dr. Hampden seems thus to regard all error as speculative, he is indifferent to the truths which he himself holds, or that, because he censures all deductions from Scripture as speculatively unsound, he has no means of rescuing himself from the effect of his own positions. He, I feel assured, is too conscientious to act and speak as he does, unless he had as yet some way of persuading himself of the truth of the doctrines which yet he holds to

[a] Dr. Hampden does "not forget, that passages of Scripture have been *retrenched*, or explained away, by Unitarians." But this does not affect his view. Dr. Hampden's own test of Christianity fails in the case of the Unitarian; but still the Unitarian is a Christian!

[b] Compare, for contrast, 1 John v. 3. iii. 23. 2 John 9

have no intrinsic evidence for those who do not believe them, or unless he could reconcile his denunciations of "the positive language of the Athanasian" with his belief in the doctrines which bear the name of that Saint: our concern is with things, not with men; with Arianism and Socinianism, not with Arians and Socinians. If, then, we see one in authority so morbidly afraid of condemning heretical error, as virtually to condemn the doctrines which his Church has received, and, in an elaborate work, preached under the sanction of the authorities of this place, at a foundation established for the refutation of error, directing his whole attack against the maintenance of all doctrinal truth beyond the bare words of Holy Scripture, then we have an evidence of such a spirit of compliance with the world's patronage of error and its hatred of positive truth, that we dare not close our eyes against it. Has not this, from the very first, been the form under which Arianism and Socinianism have made their attacks on the great doctrines of the Gospel, pretending the use of Scriptural words, while they lowered and distorted their meaning, and concealing their unbelief under the shelter of a modest reserve? And is not this the form, under which the present Latitudinarian attack on the great doctrines of Christianity is now carrying on, as if all doctrinal statements were equally true, or (which immediately follows) equally false; as if every thing disputed were to be regarded as disputable, and nothing to be held but that barren residuum

about which no one thinks it worth while to cavil, which has so little of living truth that the gainsayer is not tempted to oppose it? And when doctrinal error is thus rife without, and thus countenanced within, have we not reason to dread the opening of those floodgates, which our ancestors erected against it?

Let us pass on, then, from Dr. Hampden's pamphlet to the volume of Bampton Lectures to which he refers us, and see whether there is no cause for alarm. Is there not a cause, I ask, when we have been told, as we are by him, that there are "no dogmas to be found in Scripture," only certain "facts" which "form part of the great history of mankind," such as, *e. g.* "facts of Divine Providence which we comprehensively denote by the *doctrine* of a Trinity in Unity;"—that the doctrine of the Trinity, as laid down in our Creeds and Articles, is a scholastic theory, "the orthodox theory of the Trinity consisting in an exact scientific view of the principle of Causation," while "the heterodox failed in explaining the principle of Causation;"—that "all the theories proposed on the subject are Trinitarian in principle," and "if the opinions of Praxeas, and Artemon, and Theodotus, and Paul of Samosata, Noetus, Sabellius, and others, amounted to Unitarianism, it was only in the way of consequence and inference:"—that the notions of "punishment and satisfaction as applied to the sacrifice of Christ," are the deductions of a "scholastic theory of justice," and

that " to attribute to God any change of purpose towards man by what Christ has done" is a " scholastic theory of expiation" of " debasing effect :"—that the doctrine of grace, as stated " positively," with " those subdivisions of ' preventing' and ' following' grace, grace ' operating' and ' co-operating,' and others, which our Church has adopted," is borrowed from a " scholastic theory of transmutation ;" and that the " dogmatic manner in which we now speak of ' the grace of God' placing it in contrast with the powers of human nature, ... conveying the idea of something positive in God, produces an erroneous conception in the mind ;"—that the view of the Sacraments as " the means of supporting and renovating the life of the soul" is founded on a " belief in secret influences," to which the " belief in magic" was "auxiliary :" &c. &c.

In referring thus to Dr. Hampden's views, I trust, Sir, you will not think me guilty of confounding " those who, from the purest motives, advocatea change on what is considered the ' liberal' side of any question," with the " allies of very different principles," whom you say such persons, from the very nature of the case, will ever have, " doing great disservice to the cause." (p. 18.) To Members of Convocation, and to the public at large, Dr. Hampden undoubtedly appears as the leader of the movement. Let me beg to recal your recollection to the facts of the case. With the opening of last Term, came forth Dr. Hampden's

" Observations &c." This one only pamphlet on the ' liberal' side of the question had appeared, and that by a Head of a House, when it was made known, in the course of the Term, that the Heads of Houses had determined to recommend to Convocation " a change in (from ?) the Subscription of Undergraduates." Thus close was the connexion between " the present proposal," and on the other hand what seemed " an attack on the great *doctrines* of Christianity."

But there are those, you say, who " *imagine* a connexion between the present proposal for a change in the Subscription of Undergraduates, and the assault upon Subscription to Articles in all cases whatever in 1772." And is this really the mere working of *imagination?* Let us go into the facts of the case.

In 1772, the attack upon our Subscription took its *rise* from an attack which had been made upon the whole body of the Articles. And, just in the same way, in 1834, the attack upon our Subscription in Oxford took its rise from one which had already been made upon the whole body of the Articles. Dr. Hampden's pamphlet was expressly grounded on his Bampton Lectures, the object of which was to shew " the futility" and danger " of an argumentative speculative theology," such as we trace in our Articles. And the pamphlet concluded with suggesting the question, " whether our Articles, in the present state of theological opinion, ought to remain exactly what they are: or whether

improvements might not be made in them commensurate with the advances made in other scientific methods, and calculated to embrace a wider extent of Christian profession."

Again, is not the *line of argument* adopted in the two cases precisely the same? Was not Dr. Hampden's pamphlet actually reviewed by anticipation in 1774, in the anti-innovation publications of the day?

Dr. Hampden's Observations,
***Oxford,* 1834.**

"This point (the principle on which Christian doctrine takes its rise) does not appear to me to have been attended to at all in any discussions of the subject of Christian dissent."

"Now in the general and vague way, it is easy to answer, &c. We must go, however, beyond this superficial view of the case."

"Conclusions from Scripture are not to be placed on a level with truths which Scripture itself simply declares."

An Answer to a Pamphlet, &c.
***Oxford,* 1774.**

"When I took these Considerations on the Propriety, &c. in hand, I found myself on the entrance promised great things. I was told that several able writers, who had engaged in this cause, were yet hardly got in sight of the main question—that those original maxims which ought to direct all such enquiries, had long been and were still either too little understood, or too much disregarded."

"Our author begins with an account of the rise and progress of a custom which, as he tells us, seems to place certain explications of supposed Scriptures on the same foot with Scriptures themselves, viz. Creeds and Articles."

" It is to incur the imputation—that professing to make the Scripture the sole Rule of Faith, we have inconsistently adopted another Rule of Faith, in the deference paid to our Articles." " The dogmas of Church Communion appeal by their very nature to the reason which is involved in them."

" It is these theological conclusions which have been the fruitful source of controversy and error and heresy in the progress of Christianity."

" All that we ought to say of our own profession is, such is our ' judgment,' and we ' think also' &c."

" It will appear, I think, that all who acknowledge the divine authority of the Scriptures are much more unanimous in reality than they profess themselves to be in what they fundamentally believe."

" In religion, properly so called, few Christians if any really differ. All acknowledge with nearly unanimous assent, I believe, the great facts of the Bible."

" But we are told that these good men were not aware how little agreeable this part of their conduct might prove to the principles they first set out upon: which were, that the Holy Scripture was our only standard both of faith and practice, and that its meaning was to be ascertained to us by our own reason."

" But this, it seems, was ' one of the chief causes of the division and distresses' which we read of in Ecclesiastical story."

" Such Confessions occasion divisions and factions."

" We are told that all kinds of engagements declarative of our full and final persuasion in matters of faith, are wholly founded on principles opposed to those above mentioned, viz. that Scripture is the standard of faith, &c."

" Of pleas offered in support of Subscription, one, he says, is drawn from the sacred writings, being capable of such a variety of senses. First, he queries whether the Scriptures are in reality so differently interpreted in points of great consequence."

" If it should appear that men in reality differ less in religious belief and conduct than their formularies and doctrine would lead us to suppose, we may come to the discussion of questions connected with dissent with the indulgence due to erring judgments."

" Other communions are not necessarily in error or heresy, because we hold them to be so. The question is, which is the most correct view of religious truth, religious truth being presupposed as equally the object of each party."

" At least, we must not take this for granted, and make ourselves sole judges of this consequence."

Among the innovators of 1773, Mr. Dowdeswell talked of the " *Scholastic* subtleties of the Articles." And Sir W. Meredith said, " I am content to be the servant of these little ones, and I have done my best to save them from the oppressive hand of *spiritual tyranny*."

" The scholastic system," says Dr. Hampden, in like manner, " was a prolonged struggle between Reason and Authority," the " *Spiritual Powers* opposing the *Rationalists*, &c." " But the real state of the case is, that the spirit of *Scholasticism* still lives amongst us; though we do not acknowledge submission to its empire, we yet feel its influence."

" This is the view which I take not only of *our Articles at large*, but in particular of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds; the notions on which their

several expressions are founded are both unphilosophical and *unscriptural*:—the speculative language of these Creeds was admitted into the Church of England, as established by the Reformers, before the period when the system of Bacon exposed the emptiness of the system, which the *Schools* had palmed upon the world as the only instrument for the discovery of truth."

In 1773, Mr. Grey called the Articles "the offspring of *monkish enthusiasm*—away with such fanatical stuff; we live in more enlightened times." "Truth will prevail," said a Member (name not given); "a *rational* system of faith will triumph over the musty relics of monkish spirituality."

"In the *monasteries*," says Dr. Hampden, "a passive unthinking obedience to spiritual direction was the great object aimed at." Religion "was the privilege of the holy and speculative recluse. But the principle is still seen in that *enthusiasm*—which spends the strength of devotion in holy thoughts—like the scholastic piety. It is now an *enthusiasm* of the heart—but the principle is still the same."

Again; did the present proposal begin in a mere "proposal for a change in the Subscription of *Undergraduates?*" "I do not scruple," says Dr. Hampden, "to avow myself favourable to a removal of *all tests*, so far as they are employed as securities of orthodoxy *among our members at large*[d]." Does not this

[d] What then is to become of Tit. xvii. s. iii. §. 2. "Ipsius (Vice-Cancellarii) est—ut hæreticos, schismaticos, et quoscunque

apply to " Subscription to Articles in all cases whatever?" Did " the assault upon Subscription in 1772" go further than this. " Mr. Grey objected to these *tests*, because they excluded a multitude of Dissenters of every denomination. As to *speculative* matters in religion," said he," they are by no means material." Why then are we to be taunted with imagining a connexion between " the present proposal for a change" and " the assault upon Subscription in 1772," as though the two cases were perfectly distinct? Ought we, I ask, in fairness to be charged with " prejudice?" Are our " alarms" indeed utterly groundless, our " suspicions" unfounded or uncharitable?

" But" you say " these alarms and suspicions will

alios minus recte de fide Catholica et Doctrina vel Disciplina Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, sentientes, procul a finibus Universitatis amandandos curet. Quem in finem, quo quisque modo erga Doctrinam vel Disciplinam Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ affectus sit, *Subscriptionis criterio* explorandi ipsi jus ac potestas esto. Quod si quis S. Ordinibus initiatus (sive Præfectus Domus cujusvis sive alius quis) Articulis Fidei et Religionis, a Synodo Lond. A.D. 1502, editis et confirmatis; nec non tribus Articulis comprehensis Canone xxxvi° Libri Constitutionum ac Canonum Ecclesiasticorum, editi in Synodo Londini cœpta A.D. 1603, subscribere a Vice-Cancellario requisitus, ter abnuerit seu recusaverit; ipso facto ab Universitate exterminetur et bannietur." Would not Dr. Hampden be for " a change in" this " Subscription?" And what is to become of Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, and to the Three Articles in the Thirty-sixth Canon at Degrees? Must not this too be " changed?" and with it the Thirty-sixth Canon?

subside, if it be found, as I believe it will be, that some of the highest authorities in the Church as well as the State are themselves desirous of the change."

Here, again, we find ourselves haunted by the historical associations of 1772. In a paper of "Considerations," dated Oxford, March 19, 1772, it was said, "the very persons who in the late petition supported the Church, whisper in the ear of the Universities, that our present mode of Subscription, in all its forms, is untenable, and that unless we abandon it, they must desert us." To this was returned an answer, most apposite to our present purpose, in a paper dated Oxford, March 27, 1772. "If many 'friends of the University have expressed their wishes, that some alteration might be adopted,' and 'those wishes are still pressed upon us from every quarter,' it is surprising that many persons resident in this University, whose ears and eyes are open to public occurrences, should never, before the reading of these 'Considerations,' have received the information. The writer of 'Considerations' is a person of very extraordinary intelligence. He receives important information by private whispers; and thinks too that by a peculiar faculty of discernment he knows the opinions of other men better than themselves do. Courage, dear Sir, and pluck up your drooping spirits. Pray a little Christian patience and manly resolution, and rather let us be deserted by all our whispering friends, than ourselves fly from our

vantage ground, and basely desert our appointed station. Why should we abandon ourselves to despondency, as if our enemies were mighty, and our friends unfaithful?" Such was the reply, and it may, perhaps, appear of equal force, March 27, 1835: it may be observed, moreover, as an additional encouragement, that in the present instance instead of "*many*" wishes "*pressed upon* us from *every* quarter," there are only said to be "some," though reported to be of the highest authorities, who are merely "*desirous* of the change."

But, after all, how will "these alarms and suspicions subside, if it *be* found that some of the highest authorities in the Church as well as the State are themselves desirous of the change?" We are, it appears, "in dread of some insidious attempt"—we "think of Arians and Socinians"—we "imagine," nay trace and see, "a connexion between the present proposal and the assault in 1772." A mere "wish" expressed by the highest authorities in the Church cannot make these alarms and suspicions at once subside. What is our post and duty? Is it not to keep watch as sentinels, and dutifully give the Rulers of the Church the benefit of our alarms and suspicions? Are we not a "school of the Church?" (the Edinburgh Review has lately told us this.) Did not the Bishops in former times call in the Universities of Europe to be their assessors in questions of heresy? Did not the Pope thus apply to the University of Paris? the Archbishop of

Canterbury to the University of Oxford? Nay, did not a Pope even found a migratory University, that he might have Doctors of Theology and Law always at hand to assist him (see Edinb. Review)? Ought we not to tell the Bishops how the present proposal, as it comes before us in Oxford, comes connected with Arianism and Socinianism, and an assault upon the Articles and Subscription to Articles generally? And might not this materially affect the wish which "some" of them are supposed to entertain? But after all, as at present we are only told that it is "*believed* it will be found" so, some persons will think they may fairly wait for more conclusive evidence.

But let us look again to 1772. March 28th produced some "Observations" from the Author of the "Considerations," in which he unfolds more fully his mysterious private informations. "Further than this we ought on no consideration to go in our concessions; and I think no member of the legislative body of this realm would think of proceeding further, except we shew a determined resolution of making no alteration; in which case it is impossible to say without a prophetic spirit what may be done. I might mention what I have heard from some Members of both Houses of Parliament, and what they apprehended would be the consequence: but it might be said, that 'this is sounding a retreat before the face of the enemy is seen.' I therefore forbear, and beg leave only to add, that when this

point was agitated in the House of Commons, though it appeared that the Church of England and the University had so many warm advocates, not one single Member of that body, however well affected to us, could allege one alleviating circumstance in our behalf." Let us compare with this the Debates of Parliament in 1834. The "highest authorities" in the Church, as well as the State, then publicly spoke their sentiments. The Bishop of Exeter zealously defended the practice of Subscription, and his explanation was supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of Durham. The explanation of the meaning of Subscription, given by Lord Brougham, was referred to and sanctioned by the Bishop of Exeter; and the Duke of Wellington declared he had never heard of any inconvenience having resulted from the Subscription at Matriculation, nor of any complaint having been made against it. "On the contrary," said the noble Chancellor of the University, "I have always heard in this House, and in the other House of Parliament, and, in short, throughout the country, that the regulation at Oxford has from that time to this given the utmost satisfaction, and does at this day, with respect to the mode of Matriculation."

"I should proceed," goes on the writer of the Considerations, in 1772, "to 'communicate some of the prudential reasons which have preponderated in the judgment of those who are well affected to us,' were it not for the reason just given: but cannot forbear

mentioning that I am credibly informed, that when all the Bishops who were in London (nineteen in number) met on the 9th instant, and conferred together on the present question, they were all unanimous that something ought to be done, and that soon, by each University. I have also authority to add, that our Chancellor and two Representatives are satisfied that it is incumbent on us to make some alteration in respect to our present mode of Subscription; and that his Lordship, who (as I am informed) has already recommended this matter in a very judicious letter to the consideration of his deputy and assessors above a month since, intends to apply soon to Convocation on the same subject."

Yet even this "credible information" was boldly met by Members of Convocation. The Editor of the Collection of Papers (Oxford, 1772,) having stated several arguments against alteration, such as the University's prescriptive right and practice of near 200 years,—the presumption against so learned a body having instituted and continued a practice unwarrantable, arbitrary, and absurd, &c. proceeds to enquire, "Now what is said on the other side in favour of the alteration? A public attack was made in the House of Commons upon our Subscription. It had not one advocate. The friends, and even the Representatives of the University gave it up as indefensible. Our Chancellor intends to recommend an alteration. *The Bishops concur;* and all our friends are alarmed for the fate of the Uni-

versity." But notwithstanding all this, the writer owned himself to be " under no panic." He did not even shrink from meeting the argument drawn from the supposed wish of the Bishops as a body. He calmly asks, " had they so far considered the matter, as to form to themselves just and adequate notions of the intention of the University ?" Can they " blame the University for retaining the ancient test, till stronger reasons are produced than have yet been laid before them ? Ought they to be required to make innovations, merely in compliance with the temper of the times, when they may be thought incompatible with their duty, and productive of worse consequences than they are intended to prevent ?" Considerations such as these produced their effect in the University. The following year, Feb. 4, 1773, the proposal of change was submitted to Convocation, and lost. March 30, an Epinomis was proposed, and lost. Meanwhile, Feb. 23, Sir William Meredith's motion came on in the House of Commons, and was lost. And at the present day the University, and not the University only, but the whole Church of England, Bishops, Clergy, and Laity, looks back upon 1772 as an ill-omened year ; a time of " assault upon Subscription to Articles," with which all " connexion" must (as you show us) be studiously disclaimed by those who would, with any hope of success, advocate a " change, on what is considered the 'liberal' side of the question," and is to

be most carefully removed from the imaginations of those who are unhappily alive to alarms and suspicions.

But though "notions of this kind at present obtain currency among us," yet still we are to understand from your Letter, that "this very question of the removal of Subscription at the Matriculation is gaining ground. It has been twice considered," you tell us, "within the two last years [by the Board of Heads of Houses?], and found many more supporters [at the Board?] on the second occasion than on the first. In process of time," you say, "the dread of heresy will not prevent the dispassionate consideration of the simple question [by the Board of Heads of Houses?] Some time may be required for this. And even when the principle is admitted, the details of the change present some difficulties. Almost all the advocates for change [among the Heads of Houses?] are now agreed in preferring some Declaration in lieu of Subscription. But the *form* of such a Declaration requires to be attentively considered; the sense and force of the existing Subscription are not understood alike by all."

It would seem from this, that "the cause of truth" is making its way but slowly, even among the Heads of Houses: it is to be hoped, therefore, that "the more impatient spirits" of whom you speak, (p. 26.) will bear long with the slowness of perception in the Members of Convocation at large.

"Time is required: we may not move very quickly; but ought we to do so?"

But, after all, is what you consider "the cause of truth" really making progress? It may be, as you say, that "some of the defenders of the present practice acknowledge, that if they were to found a University, they would not adopt it. They may soon," you think, "be contented to discard what even now in part they disapprove." They *may*, indeed, and it may be *soon;* but this is only anticipation and conjecture. At present only "some," you tell us, have come to admit, that if they were to found a new University, they would not adopt the practice established amongst us here: but it does not follow that even these persons are prepared to give up the practice, now that it is established. And these after all are but "some." Where, meanwhile, are those of whom you speak, who are "in dread of some insidious attempt against the great doctrines of Christianity;" who feel "anxiety for the Church, and for the University as a Church of England institution;" (p. 18.) who have watched with fear and sorrow "the late intemperate hostility of the Dissenters," the "bitter spirit," the "palpable injustice" which they have displayed towards the Church and its Seminaries; who "entertain a just presumption in favour of what has been established" for 250 years; who are not ashamed to speak of "the wisdom of our forefathers;" (p. 19.) or to avow a "dread of heresy;" (p. 21.)

who think that the act of Subscription is in itself "most useful and salutary, fostering humility and a dutiful spirit, springing from, and increasing, a dutiful and affectionate attachment to the Church and her doctrines;" (p. 20.)—where are these men? Standing firm, (it is now fully ascertained,) and closely bound together; feeling, more strongly perhaps every day, the importance of the post which it is their duty to maintain; and determined, in humble dependence on Might and Power unearthly, resolutely to maintain it to the last.

But again, Sir, I would beg leave to ask, what symptoms have we that what you consider "the cause of truth" is really "making progress" even in the Body to whose deliberations you seem to refer? "Almost all the advocates of a change," you say, "are now agreed in preferring some Declaration in lieu of Subscription."

The phrase is unintentionally ambiguous. It implies, at first sight, that those who now prefer some Declaration to Subscription are more in number than a few months past; it must, however, mean, that those now prefer a Declaration who, some few months past, advocated the unconditional abolition of Subscription; and so though "the cause of truth" is gaining ground, it is because "what is considered the 'liberal' side of the question" is really on the decline. The wish for a Declaration is gaining ground, not among those who hitherto advocated Subscription, but among

those who advocated total change: "the cause of truth" has prospered, not by an advance, but by a return, at least *towards* the institutions of our fore-fathers. Although we learn with sorrow, that not only the Head of a Hall, who, even last November, avowed himself "favourable to a removal of all tests," but that others also of a Body, to which we look with respect, advocated at one time a more extensive change, we rejoice to hear of this their return to the "truth." If more time be allowed them, we should not despair of finding them altogether consistent in the truth, and the advocates of Subscription.

You, Sir, on the other hand, "doubt not" that, whatever "prejudice" and "alarms and suspicions" may at present exist among us, "or whatever obstacles there may be of any kind at the present juncture to a quiet investigation of the truth," (p. 21.) yet "all those misapprehensions and fears will" in time "vanish away," and "some form of Declaration be at length approved." What, then, are the arguments to which the advocates of the change so confidently look for final success? I will beg permission briefly to consider them.

"It will be found," you say, "upon enquiry, that the majority of young men are unlikely to have studied the Articles to any useful purpose previously to their admission." This argument was much dwelt upon in 1772. But however "unlikely" it may be, has it not, I would beg per-

mission to ask, been found, " upon enquiry," as matter of *fact*, that many young men have studied the Articles to a certain degree previously to their admission? And it may be asked, what is exactly meant by their not having studied them " to any useful purpose?" " For no person," it was remarked in 1772 (March 27), " gains admission here, who is not arrived at *some degree of understanding*; few that are unlearned." So now again, in 1834, it was asked, (in some "Questions, submitted to Members of Convocation, by a Bachelor of Divinity,") " Do not *most* of those who now enter the University sign the Articles with a *full conviction*, that the truths therein contained are founded in Holy Scripture?" and this, in many cases, " as the result of their own search into Scripture?" It was asked further, " Have not many of those who now sign the Articles with a full conviction of their truth, been induced to make themselves acquainted with them, in consequence of their knowing that they would be required to sign them? and has not the *knowledge* of the holy truths therein contained, which they have thus acquired, been often of *the greatest value* to them?" These questions refer to matters of *fact*: their force is not met by the mere suggestion, that " the majority of young men are *unlikely* to have studied the Articles to any useful purpose previously to their admission."

But even supposing that " the majority of young men" have not this " full conviction" of the truth

of the doctrines contained in the Articles, "as the result of their own search into Scripture;" supposing that their conviction is grounded on the fact of the Thirty-nine Articles "being the Articles of the Church to which they belong," or "as being acknowledged by elder and more advanced Christians;" still, it has been asked, "has not this a good effect . . . . in fostering a humble, teachable, and so a Christian frame of mind?" This is an argument which you notice as "especially prevalent" among us. (p. 20.) You admit that "it may be so;" that "it may be the effect upon some minds; and yet," you say, "the usual effect of the system upon many more may be the reverse of salutary." Here again, Sir, surely *facts* ought to be brought forward. Let it be *proved* that our present practice has produced a mischievous effect upon "many more" than it has benefited: let it be shewn that "the usual effect of the system" has been "the reverse of salutary." The defenders of the present practice do not shrink from "enquiry;" they desire nothing more than "a quiet investigation of the truth;" but they know, and could appeal to, those who would testify, that to themselves individually the effect of Subscription at Matriculation has been most salutary; and they call upon the advocates of the change to bring forward some preponderating evidence, in support of the mere probabilities which they allege.

But you object still further, that not only are "the

majority of young men unlikely to have studied the Articles to any useful purpose *previously* to their admission," but that *even then*, if I understand you rightly, they are not competent to enter upon the study. "It will be found," you say, "that the study of many of the Articles is with greater propriety and advantage deferred to a riper age. It is usual in Colleges, accordingly, not to give Lectures to the Students in the Thirty-nine Articles until their second or third year; and the Lectures of the Margaret Professor of Divinity, which are commonly on the same subject, are expressly intended for members of the University of from two to seven years standing." But supposing it granted that the study of "many" of the Articles is with greater propriety and advantage deferred to a riper age: does it therefore follow that there are *none* of the Articles which may be advantageously studied at an earlier? Supposing that it is usual in Colleges not to give the regular course of Lectures, which is to take the student through the whole body of Articles, as a system of doctrine, until the second or third year; does it follow that the tutor may not be most beneficially employed, from the very first, in unfolding to his pupil's mind the more important doctrines of his Church as they are taught in the Articles? In fact, could he explain to him a single chapter of the Gospel history, without involving the most important doctrines contained in the Articles? The University, at least, if we may judge

from the language of her Statute book, (Tit. iii. §.2.) seems to regard it as the tutor's duty, throughout the whole period of his scholar's undergraduate course, not only to imbue him with good principles, and instruct him in approved authors, "but chiefly in the rudiments of Religion and the Articles of Doctrine agreed upon in 1560." With reference to the Lectures of the Margaret Professor of Divinity, they are, if I mistake not, by the Statutes of the University intended for Bachelors of Divinity, and Members on the Foundation of Colleges who are in holy Orders. (Tit. iv. §. 17.) If, however, the appeal be made to the present practice, one would think that, if the Student is admitted, in his second year, to a regular course of Lectures in the Articles, which are intended to include Clergymen of seven years standing in the University, he must, during his first year, be capable of entering upon the study of some of them, as they would be explained in the more elementary Lectures of his College Tutor.

But you observe, "it will be considered also, that the Church of England herself has never required Subscription of the Thirty-nine Articles from her lay members. So far as knowledge and faith are concerned, she admits all persons to the highest act of Church communion, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as soon as she has admitted them to Confirmation; and in order to Confirmation, she requires assent only to the Apostles' Creed, and to the doctrinal points of the Church Catechism." This

argument was also urged in 1772. It was then met by the consideration, that "our Statutes about Subscription are, in a manner, coeval with the Articles themselves;" that the Articles were "agreed on in Convocation in 1562;" that "in 1572 they were established by an Act of Parliament requiring all Clergymen to subscribe them;" and that "immediately after, in 1573, the magistrates of the University required Subscription of *all those who took degrees;* and that too, as it should seem, by the authority of the Government[h]. For when some proved refractory, complaint was made to the Chancellor and to the Queen's council, who enforced what had been done. And in 1581, the Earl of Leicester, our Chancellor, wrote to the University recommending to them to require *all Scholars to be Matriculated*, to subscribe to the Articles. Subscription therefore to our Articles in this University was in a manner coeval with the Articles themselves." And this extension of Subscription from the body of the Clergy to "the youth of our religious academical community" was, as Bishop Horne remarked in 1773, "perfectly conformable to the expressed design of the Articles: 'the avoiding diversities of

[h] In like manner the Subscription to the Three Articles, required of "all that take any degree in Schools," was ordered by King James (in 1616) "by the advice of *such Bishops and other Clergy* as were then about him," and his directions were addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, certain Heads of Houses, the *two Professors of Divinity*, &c.

opinions, and establishing consent touching true religion.' For," as he observes, " it does not, by the *Title* of the Articles, appear to have been the first intention of the then governors in Church and State to confine their operation to the Clergy ; and if it had been so, still when that restriction seemed likely to fail of answering the expectation of the Government, and the Church began to be in danger, schism assailing it on the one side, and Popery on the other, common prudence could not fail to recommend the extending of Subscription in such a manner, as might seem best calculated to effect the purpose for which the Articles were compiled. And what could be more effectual to that end, than the requiring this Subscription from every member of the great nursery of religion and learning. From such persons our religious establishment might naturally expect the firmest support or the deepest detriment." " The objection, therefore, against Academical Subscription, viz. that ' the Articles were originally meant to be subscribed by the Clergy only,' is not," according to Bishop Horne's judgment, " fairly urged, nor is of any weight, even though we grant Clerical Subscription to have been at first supposed to be all that was necessary." The Articles, in short, were agreed upon " for the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true Religion :" the University, a School of religious learning, was especially liable to diversities of opinions, which would

not equally beset private Christians or ordinary congregations, and it was most important that there should be established within its walls "consent touching true religion;" it was therefore in perfect accordance with the object for which the Articles were drawn up, and a most wise and well-considered furtherance of that object, that the Members of the University should be required to subscribe them. Thus might she better preserve "quietness, peace, and love" among all Christian people, especially among those who had been, or might be, committed to her charge.

I cannot, however, pass from this point, Sir, without expressing the difficulty which I feel in understanding your remark, that, in order to Confirmation, the Church "requires assent only to the Apostles' Creed, and to the doctrinal points contained in the Church Catechism." Surely no assent is required, in order to Confirmation, except to the Apostles' Creed—to those "Articles of the Christian Faith," which the youthful member of the Church, "ratifying and confirming" that solemn assent which had been given to them in his name at his baptism, now in his own person acknowledges himself "bound to believe." He is indeed required, preparatory to Confirmation, to be able to "answer to such other questions as in the short Catechism are contained," just as a candidate for the B.A. degree in the University would be required in the Schools to answer to questions in the Thirty-

nine Articles, were he even *then* only called on to subscribe to the Apostles' Creed. But I cannot see on what ground the Catechism is made a symbolical book of our Church; and, I must confess, I am surprised at your proposing a form of declaration, in which the person is to profess his belief in "the Articles of faith expressed in the Apostles' Creed, and in the Catechism of the Church." Surely in the Apostles' Creed are contained all "the Articles of" the Christian's "belief," that "Faith" into which alone the churchman is baptized, and in which alone, as you observe, the Church examines him on his death-bed, "that she may know whether he believes as a Christian man should or no." But there are certain "other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health:" these, involved in the Apostles' Creed, are more fully unfolded in the Church Catechism, set forth for that purpose; and in this a young person is to be examined before he be confirmed. Still further for "the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true Religion," certain "Articles of Religion" have been agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops, and Clergy of the Church of England: these the University makes the text book for that further instruction, which she gives to those, now two or three years older than when they were confirmed, who come to her for more advanced cultivation. But before they enter upon this course of

religious instruction, they are called upon to subscribe to the Articles. And is not this, it was asked in the last century, and has been asked again in this, analogous to teaching a child to say the Catechism, or the Creed, before it can understand them? The parent or sponsor is beginning a course of instruction in the Catechism, and the child is first made to say the Catechism, and then gradually learns its fuller meaning. The University is beginning a course of instruction in the Articles, and the young man is first made to subscribe to the Articles, and then is gradually taught their fuller meaning. The principle in both cases is the same[a], the only difference being that, in the one case, the mouth is the instrument, in the other, the hand. It would be obviously inconvenient to require a young person, coming up to Matriculation,

[a] Dr. Hampden maintains that "the instances are not parallel. By teaching the Creed," he says, "we commence the *education* of the child. We do not mean to exclude other children; but we simply educate our own child in that way. But tests at admission to the University are exclusions, and nothing more. They form no element of education." Observations, p. 36. This is a mere *petitio principii*. The defenders of the present practice maintain that the Subscription to the Articles at Matriculation is not a mere test and exclusion, but rather an essential element in our system of religious education. They "contend," as Dr. Hampden himself tells us, "that it is desirable to maintain Subscription to Articles, as *enforcing a Christian principle*." p. 37. Accidentally, the Subscription acts as an exclusion; because there are found to be persons who will not submit to our mode of teaching.

to have the whole Book of Articles by heart; and the act of putting his hand to them seems exactly equivalent to the taking the words of the Catechism on his lips, and uttering them as his own. The mere reading of the Articles would not seem so completely to answer the purpose. What objection can there be here but the now common outcry, that "persons ought not to be required to sign that, of the truth of which they have not convinced themselves?" And "if we abandon Subscription, in compliance with this outcry, should we not," it has been asked, "be strengthening the faulty notions of the day, which make private judgment every thing, authority and the Church nothing?"

Here again we are only going over anew the discussions of the last century. "Is a child," asked Bishop Horne in 1773, "more capable of comprehending the grounds of the doctrines of the Catechism, than a youth of fifteen is capable of judging of the foundations upon which the doctrines of the Articles are constructed? And yet the child, without any prohibition from the governors of our Church, is permitted to be taught this formulary, almost as soon as he can lisp it out." Why should not the child suggest to the consideration of its parent or sponsor, that, at his baptism, he promised only to believe all the Articles of Christian Faith, as contained in the Apostles' Creed; that he is, indeed, "ready and willing to be further instructed" in the Church Catechism, and the additional "Arti-

cles of Faith" which he thinks are expressed in it, with a view to being able to answer the questions which may be put to him when he presents himself for Confirmation; but that the Church will then only call upon him to give his assent to the Apostles' Creed; and that therefore, for his teacher now to require of him, by repeating the Catechism, to give his assent to its fuller statements of doctrine, is "a departure from the practice of the Church, which seems to call for a very sufficient justification." Thank God, we are not yet come to this: thank God, "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings He" yet "perfecteth praise," that He may "still the enemy and the avenger," and put to everlasting silence the proud spirit of independence and mistrust; thank God, the little children are still standing before us, in the same affectionate spirit of humility and teachableness, as when the Saviour of the world took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them, and said, "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." And shall we, in this "nursery and seminary of the Church," teach any other lesson? Surely, "we have not so learned Christ."

But you object, Sir, still further, that "to impose Subscription to the same document, at first in a lower sense and afterwards in the highest possible," our friends "will ever regard as a proceeding full of danger." (p. 25.) Here, I must confess,

I am at a loss to understand to what you refer. I suppose you to allude to the Subscription to the Articles required by the University, first at Matriculation, and then again on taking the B.A. degree. But surely the act of Subscription to the Book of Articles has the same sense in the two cases; the difference being that, in the second case the young person is required to subscribe to the Three Articles in the Thirty-sixth Canon, the third of which is "that I allow the Book of Articles of Religion .... and *that I acknowledge all and every of the Articles therein contained*, being in number nine and thirty, *to be agreeable to the word of God.*" I must beg leave, therefore, to contend, that the University does not "impose Subscription to the same document, at first in a lower sense, and afterwards in the highest possible." The sense in both cases is essentially the same, though the degree of knowledge, and consequently of individual conviction, is higher in the one case than in the other. But neither can I admit that, even on this second occasion, is Subscription given to the Thirty-nine Articles, or even to the Three Articles in the Thirty-sixth Canon, in the "highest possible sense." "Students may, indeed, be supposed by this time," as was remarked in 1772, "to have a competent acquaintance with the doctrines and their proofs. Not," however, "that the candidates for degrees are supposed to be great divines, or to have obtained a complete knowledge of all the controversies about

the points contained in our Articles: this is scarce to be expected even of all candidates for Orders. Sufficient it is, that they are on reasonable proof persuaded of the truth of them." And surely the subscription of a candidate for Deacon's Orders does not carry with it so high a sense as that of the candidate for Priest's Orders: nor his again so high as the subscription of the learned theologian who, in later life, and after years of deep and patient study, is advanced to some exalted station in the Church, and called in consequence to renew his subscription. Yet who shall think of "the height, and breadth, and length, and depth" of mystery, which is unfolded in the first five of our Articles alone, and say that he gives his assent to the awful truths they contain, "in the highest possible sense?" "One star" doubtless "differeth from another star in glory;" and the "fathers" in Christ, by their knowledge in His mystery, would put to shame the "young men," though they be "strong" and "the word of God" be in them—much more the "little children," whose blessed privilege still it is that "they have known the Father." But even these well-instructed scribes would own, that they too are but children picking up a few pebbles on the shore of Eternity, and faintly catching the sound of its "mighty waters rolling evermore." And thus it is that the fathers, and the young men, and the little children, are found sitting together in the school of Christ and His Church. There is no sub-

mission to authority so lowly as to exclude all individual knowledge; there is no degree of knowledge so high as to supersede all deference to authority. Or if this be doubted, who, at least, will say that he has for himself fathomed to the very bottom the depths of the Seventeenth Article? Thus much, Sir, at least is clear, that "the proposed change in the Subscription of Undergraduates" at Matriculation, must soon be followed by the "proposal of a change in the Subscription" on taking the B. A. Degree. For, says Dr. Hampden, "those who have served the office of Public Examiner for Degrees (I speak from my own experience) will be able to attest, that even four years of discipline and instruction in the University, still leave many very imperfectly acquainted with the doctrines of the Church." And, doubtless, Bishops' Chaplains will be found to make the same complaint of many candidates for Orders. In short, as Bishop Horne observed in 1773, if we "consider the hundred thousand questions and scruples which have been agitated, concerning every iota and tittle of the sacred volumes, we shall soon see that such an examination as these rational objectors to the Subscription in question require, would equally bar all determinations, all Subscriptions, as well those of grave Bishops, as of Oxford Undergraduates. It cannot be imagined," as the Bishop further remarks, "that the spectre which has put our governors in so terrible a fright, will haunt us no more, after the

present point is gained. The absurdity of Subscription, once established in one instance, will be urged with a zeal animated by success, in another instance. Arguments *equally forcible* will be urged against the Subscription of candidates for Graduatcy; and who knows, whether, at some period, under less watchful guardians than the Church is at present blest with, the example of the University of Oxford may not be alleged and admitted as an argument against all Subscription? When the Universities, the seminaries of the Church, and the genuine repositories of true Religion as well as sound learning, shall have given up all, or even a part of, their wonted concern for securing the principles, and 'for establishing the consent' of their Members 'touching true religion,' the reason will seem to have ceased for requiring any Subscriptions at all." It will be said that "the Archbishops and Bishops of both Provinces, and the whole Clergy" of the Church did, indeed, "in the Convocation holden at London in the year 1562," agree upon those Articles, "for the avoiding of Diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true Religion;" and that in 1581 the Convocation of the University of Oxford, with a view to the same object, passed a Statute that these Articles should be subscribed by all its Members; but that, in 1834, at a time when there were great "diversities of opinions," and a lamentable want of "consent touching true Religion," at a time "when the state

of parties and professions among Christians" was "attracting extraordinary attention," and men on all sides were violently "rending piecemeal the coat of Christ without seam[a];" some "Observations on Religious Dissent, with particular reference to the use of Religious Tests in the University," appeared in Oxford, from the pen of a person high in authority, a Head of a House, a Professor, and a Bampton Lecturer, in which it was shewn, that Articles, and articulate statements of doctrine, were themselves "the fruitful source of controversy and error and heresy," the very cause of "diversities of opinions," the great obstacle in the way of any "consent touching true Religion;"—and that the University forthwith proceeded to abolish Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles in the case of its Members at large. The light of truth, it will be said, broke in upon the Church in 1772, from the Feathers' Tavern, but the University would not admit it; after an interval of sixty years, however, it came forth with fresh power, and, in 1835, won its first triumph in the Convocation House at Oxford. With such a prospect before us, I must beg permission, Sir, to ask, what we are to understand by that "cause of truth," which you seem to speak of as distinct from "this very question of the removal of Subscription at the Matriculation," and which you tell Lord Radnor he may "be thoroughly assured will at length prevail among us?"

[a] Dr. Hampden's Observations, p. 1.

And now, Sir, permit me to approach the consideration of "the broad principle" of your objection to the present system, viz. "as directly tending without necessity or advantage to bring a very solemn act into light esteem." How, I would beg to ask, does it tend to do this? And is not a Declaration respecting religious belief, whether positive or negative, likewise a "very solemn act?" And will not the same causes which operate now, bring this also into "light esteem?" Of one thing, Sir, be assured; that were your Declaration, of whatever form, "at length approved," not one single step nearer would you be towards the satisfying of friends, or foes, that you are not bringing solemn acts into light esteem? Why did Lord Brougham object, last year, to Subscription? "My Lords, I cannot help thinking, that in whatever way Subscription may be considered, the practical question for us to consider is, *not the nature of Subscription*, but the consequences which it entails upon those whom it excludes, and *the odium, and indeed contempt, which it brings upon the ceremonies it is intended to sanctify*. In a word, it is liable to all the objections that can be urged against *tests*, with this addition, that it is *a test applied to the young and ignorant*, to those whom it must influence, if not bind, in after life. *As a test* then, and the *worst kind of test*, I utterly abominate it." What will your Declaration be, in the present Session of Parliament? a test, the very worst kind of test,

applied to the young, excluding Dissenters—and yet not instructing or building up Churchmen. Here we shall be again in "a position" which "our enemies" at least will "take possession of whenever they please, to make use of to the injury of our real defences." (p. 26.) It will be said, as it was said of Cambridge in 1772, Oxford, "to save appearances, did what? just as good as nothing; they are still in the days of superstitious darkness." As to our friends, it cannot be wished or hoped that they should defend the Declaration more warmly than they did our Subscription last year.

And here, Sir, I am glad to observe that you fully admit "that the existing practice may be explained and defended." (p. 24.) But then you think that "even if we satisfy ourselves, we shall never supply an explanation satisfactory to the parents of our pupils or to our friends in Parliament." (p. 25.) Have then the parents of our pupils expressed dissatisfaction? Did they express it in 1834? Did they express it in 1772? Let us hear the Chancellor of the University in 1773. "But, Sir, if there were any grievance," said Lord North, "who are the parties to complain? Certainly, the young Academics themselves, or their parents or guardians, in their name and on their behalf. Have we received any such complaints? none whatever." And now let us hear the Chancellor of the University in 1834. "I have never heard of any complaint having been made against it. On the

contrary I have always heard in this House, and in the other House of Parliament, and, in short, *throughout the country*, that the regulation at Oxford has from that day to this given the utmost satisfaction, and *does so at this day*." The parents of our pupils know what is our practice; they doubt not that we have adopted it in watchfulness over their children's best and highest interest; were they not satisfied with the regulations of the seminaries of the Church, they would send their sons elsewhere.

But "our friends in Parliament—we shall never satisfy" *them*. But we have satisfied them; we have done more; we have satisfied our very enemies. Lord Brougham saw nothing unsatisfactory in the matter. He thought that "at least to every ninety-nine persons out of every hundred" the meaning of Subscription and of the Statute which required it were perfectly obvious. But "our friends,"—the Subscription at Matriculation, you say, "begins to be considered as a position, which our friends admit to be *untenable*." (p. 25.) Here again we catch the echo of 1772 (March 19). "The very persons who in the late petition supported the Church, whisper in the ear of the Universities that our present mode of Subscription is *untenable* ground." Now, as then (March 27), it may be replied, "rather let us be deserted by all our whispering friends, than ourselves basely desert our appointed station. So long as our present ground *is* tenable, let us not wilfully abandon it. Why

should we abandon ourselves to despondency? Why should we not hope for good from the mildness and justice of our governing superiors, from whom we deserve the best of treatment? But if this University must *now* be the *only* object of persecution in the British dominions; and if 'the cry which is gone out' against us must prevail; it were better for us to fall by the hand of another than by our own."

But, you say, "they will not enter into our distinctions between acquiescence and assent; they will see no valid reason why the University should demand of youths of twelve or eighteen, Subscription to Articles of faith to which the Church requires Subscription from her ministers alone; and to impose Subscription to the same document, at first in a lower sense, and afterwards in the highest possible, they will ever regard as a proceeding full of danger." (p. 25.) I must beg leave to observe, that in 1834 these fearful objections were not taken; is not this, therefore, to follow in the steps of "the Author of Considerations," of whom his correspondent complained, he "sounds a retreat before he sees the face of an enemy?" (March 27, 1772.) But really if our friends have no confidence in us, if they cannot trust the Clergy of the Church on such points of Discipline as these, and cannot see the force of their valid explanations, they had better send their sons to be educated by ministers of other communions, and leave the Church of God, its Clergy, and its

Schools, to the care of that guardian Providence which, as we review the records of our past history, we see has so wonderfully protected them.

But let us look once more to the result of the contest in the last century. In 1772, the pamphlet discussion went on in Oxford till April 20th, when it was considered "probable that the matter might be still farther agitated elsewhere." Meanwhile "Oxford would do nothing." A delegacy only was appointed to *examine records*, and to ascertain how far the *power* of the University extended, relative to changes of alterations in the matter of Subscription; and, in the course of the year, a Chancellor was elected, who, in the debate of February 6th, 1772, having come down to the House with an intention to move for receiving the petition of the Feathers' Tavern Clergy, and reserving the discussion of its merits to another day, had "declared that he had heard enough on the subject to convince him, that the only way of treating the petition was at once to reject it."

But with another Session of Parliament the threatened attack came on. Doubtless it was a day of alarm among the friends of our institutions; "a day of trouble and perplexity," such as the Prophet saw coming upon "the valley of vision," a day on which they looked fearfully to "the breaches of the city of David," and would have "broken down the houses to fortify the wall." In Oxford a Convocation was called for 4th of February, and a

proposal submitted to it to substitute, as had been done at Cambridge, in the case of Bachelors, seven months before, a Declaration in lieu of Subscription to the Articles at Matriculation. "Excellent speeches are said to have been made on the occasion, but the House would not consent to any alteration; the proposed formulary scarcely even came into discussion, for the whole time and attention of Convocation were occupied upon previous questions, relating to the *principles* of the proposed measure, and the *powers* of the Academic body." On the 23d of the month Sir W. Meredith brought forward his motion. "I did not clearly understand," says a distinguished person who was present at the time, (in a letter dated February 25th,) "in what form the question was moved by Sir W. Meredith; but the substance of it was to oblige the University of Oxford to accept *a Declaration instead of Subscription*. In the course of the debate, the whole was agitated—the conduct of the University in their late vote, the effect of Subscription, and the merits of the Articles. It was the best debate of this Session, and all the good speaking was on the side of the University:—the speeches are much talked of." The defenders of the University, we find, contended, that with her, and not with Parliament, rested the right and the duty of judging on matters of discipline. Mr. Welbore Ellis said, "The several statutes have given to the Universities powers and privileges. They possess the power to

make such regulations for their own government, as may appear to the wisdom and experience of Convocation best adapted to *the ends of their institution*. I proceed to declare, that calling on the Legislature to control, by Act of Parliament, the conduct and consciences of Members of Convocation, is a mode of proceeding which I must be permitted to call unjust and injudicious, and so deserving of censure that I shall vote against it." But the objection which is *now* so fearfully anticipated, was not *then* forgotten. "Mr. Dowdeswell could not agree with the last speaker, that the University regulation respecting Subscription had a tendency to promote national good:" &c. Mr. Welbore Ellis rose again. He said, "This matter ought to be left to the judgment of that body which has for ages acquitted itself for the public good, and to the satisfaction of the State. But, Sir, I will go further. What were the great *ends* proposed by Founders and Benefactors for the guidance of their judgments, and the determination of their munificence? Were not those noble institutions intended to assist in the great work of national *edification*, in *the building up of the youth of the country* in the national *faith?* Did they not design to make the Universities fruitful parents of attached and faithful *sons of the Church* as well as of themselves?—Their design was to make the Universities the *guardians of the national faith;* and those who wish to share her benefits and patronage, are required, as a proof of uniformity

with her in religious sentiments, to subscribe to the Articles of their common Church. And then with respect to youths not intended for holy Orders—is it not the duty of parents as well as of the University, to give *every possible furtherance* to those means and methods whereby young men may become attached to the established *faith* and worship?" Mr. Welbore Ellis was followed by other speakers on the same ground. Mr. Cornwall "vindicated the right of the University to pass any bye-law in *matters of Discipline*, and opposed the motion as implying a censure of their conduct in a case in which they *only supported the laws in being*." Sir William Dolben said, "the question before us seems to be whether it is at all expedient for this House to interfere in the matter of Subscription."

Thus were friends raised up to the University for the Church's sake, when he, the sworn defender and guardian of her Statutes, who, in the words which Bishop Horne had addressed to him, was, "under God, the most able to protect her," was slack to use his political power in her behalf. "I know some ministerial members," says the writer of the letter already referred to[a], "who were doubtful of the issue of the day, as Lord North had not summoned his friends to attend, and spoke with

[a] See Dr. Dealtry's Charge for 1834, Note Ii, where a very interesting account of the two Debates (of 1772 and 1773) is given "by a distinguished person who was present at the time."

great moderation, though very ably. The numbers, notwithstanding, were 159 to 67." Surely the University learnt a lesson on that day which she will not *now* forget. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man; for there is no help in them. Blessed is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his God; who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is; who keepeth his promise for ever."

Meanwhile, what had Cambridge gained by her concession? "A Member (name not given) said, I regret we did not go into the question last year. The Universities took the alarm, but how did they act? Oxford would do nothing, and Cambridge, *to save appearances*, did what? *just as good as nothing;* they are still in the days of superstitious darkness."

And may we not hope, Sir, that such friends may stand up for us again, if we are again singled out for special attack? They will say again that the University has a right to settle her own discipline, as seems to her most agreeable to her character and duties as a seminary of the Church; that her members, strange as it may sound in the ears of this generation, have still a dread of heresy; that they think that the present practice, without needless exclusiveness, is admirably fitted to exclude the heretical Spirit, and that no Declaration can possibly be framed which will exactly answer the object required. Doubtless there will be found those who will be astonished at our superstition, or laugh at

our folly; and Parliament may declare such an institution a pest to an enlightened country, and take away the civil privileges which it once granted to the University of Oxford. But the Christian parents who have committed their children to our care will think differently. Believing, on the sure testimony of Scripture, that there is such a sin as "heresy," and taught to pray earnestly against it in the solemn Litany of the Church, when they see us taking our stand, and, by God's grace, defending the barriers which we believe are fitted to keep out the enemy, they also will feel strengthened against "the evil day"—they will "thank God, and take courage." And those who come after us shall say, when they look back upon the struggle which it seems our appointed lot to undergo,—they "gave place by subjection no not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with us."

One only remark more I will beg permission to make, in reference to this memorable debate. The defenders of the University looked far beyond petty scruples and objections, and saw the principles at work. "Whence, Sir," said Mr. Jenkinson, "arises all this declamation? does it not come out of a spirit of *indifference* to all religions, and all *professions of faith*, and all *articulate statements* of what a man believes and what he does not believe? Does it not proceed from the scepticism and infidelity of the age? With respect, therefore, to an exemption from *human ties* in matters of religion, I

am against it. And, Sir, I feel it my duty, as a Christian, to avow, that opinion much depends upon the *first institution* of a young man; and *every innovation* in that which for ages has been found to answer its purpose (the great purpose of binding men together in one Lord, one faith, one baptism) *ought to be avoided.* The present practice has answered its purpose. I am not for substituting any other method of Matriculation, and I oppose the Speaker's leaving the chair." "We are told, Sir, of reformation[b]," said Lord North. "The reforming notions of the age, Sir, are dangerous in their tendency. More than reformation is intended, something that deserves a harsher name, something to which if we give way, adieu to Religion, adieu to every thing dear to us as men and Christians."

The University is, as we have been often told, a seminary of the Church, and was such long before it was a civil corporation, or had "friends" in a national Parliament; her first enquiry will, therefore, be, what regulations and what discipline are most in harmony with the spirit of the Church, and will best fulfil its high and holy purposes. She is the offspring of the Church: she was

[b] "But this question resolves itself into a still higher one: whether our Articles, in the present state of Theological opinion, ought to remain exactly what they are; or whether improvements might not be made in them, in furtherance indeed of the views of the *Reformers* themselves." Dr. Hampden's Observations, p. 42.

nurtured by the Church, guarded by the Church, watched over by the Church, restored by the Church; she has ever been by her, as one brought up with her, returning her anxious care with dutiful sympathy and aid, ever feeling for her trials, and supplying her wants;—this is all plain *historical fact*;—and if now she were to leave her, in quest of earthly "friends," if she dared to feel or to act as a mere "literary society," "only accidentally a society of Church members[b]," in what characters deep enough for "a spectacle to angels and to men," should the name of APOSTATE be stamped upon her forehead? Rather let her think upon her own sacred badge "Dominus illuminatio mea;" and let that heavenly strain of stedfast faith and holy confidence from which the words are borrowed,—so descriptive of her past history, her present duties, and her future prospects,—be ever in her mouth and in her heart, when she sees the days of darkness coming on, and earthly friends are few. "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of

[b] Hampden's Observations, p. 39.

the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, and behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain way because of mine enemies.—Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord."

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

A RESIDENT MEMBER OF CONVOCATION.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

A

LETTER

TO

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON,

CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

UPON THE

PRINCIPLE AND TENDENCY

OF

A BILL

NOW BEFORE PARLIAMENT,

ENTITLED,

"AN ACT PROHIBITING SUBSCRIPTION TO THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES IN CERTAIN CASES."

BY THE

REV. FREDERICK OAKELEY, M.A.

FELLOW AND TUTOR OF BALLIOL COLLEGE,

PREBENDARY OF LICHFIELD, AND CHAPLAIN TO THE EARL STANHOPE.

SECOND EDITION.

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LONDON.

1835.

Lord Radnor's Bill respecting the Thirty-nine Articles.

WHEREAS the Subscription of particular Articles of Faith in the case of persons of tender years, and before they can have so accurately and minutely examined the same, and the grounds on which they rest, as to give an entire and implicit assent to the doctrines therein laid down, is unreasonable, and may tend to evil consequences: be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the passing of this Act, no person shall be required by any person or persons in authority in the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, or elsewhere, within the King's dominions, to *subscribe* or *declare his assent* to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces, and the whole Clergy in the Convocation holden in London in 1652[a] [1562?] or the Three Articles contained in the Thirty-sixth Canon, at the time of Matriculation at either of the said Universities, or of entrance at any College or Hall within the same, and until he shall have attained the age of twenty-three years, or, in case he shall take the degree of Master of Arts before he has attained the age of twenty-three years, until he shall have taken the said degree.

Provided always, and be it further enacted, That nothing in this Act contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to exempt any person from the obligation to subscribe such Articles, or to make such declarations, as, by the custom and Statutes of the said Universities, are now required, before any person can sit and vote in the Convocation or Senate of the said Universities respectively, or as may now by law be required in order to qualify such person to take any Ecclesiastical Orders, or to preside or sit as Judge in any Court Spiritual or Ecclesiastical, or to hold any Ecclesiastical office or benefice whatsoever, or *as under the special requisition of the Founder of any endowment are now required to be subscribed, or made, to enable the Members thereof to enjoy the benefits of the same.*

[a] In the authorized Parliamentary copy of the Bill which I have seen, the date of the Articles is printed at full length, (so as scarcely to appear like a typographical error,) *one thousand six hundred and fifty-two.* The Solemn League and Covenant was the only set of Articles recognized at that time. This should be corrected.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

Advertisement to the Second Edition.

In publishing a Second Edition of this Pamphlet, the Author desires to express his thanks to an individual of great theological and historical learning, resident in the University, for the suggestion of a remark, in confirmation of his argument, which now forms the subject of a note in page 14.

He also thinks it well to state, that he has employed the time which has intervened between the publication of the two editions, in giving his anxious attention to views and statements put forth, in the first instance, under circumstances of supposed urgency, and in the midst of many other engagements. He has likewise, during that time, had the advantage of collecting opinions from many persons, to whose judgment, in this matter, he greatly defers. The result has been, that, excepting the addition above mentioned, one note in page 20, and the slight alteration of a passage which was thought by some to admit of a construction certainly never intended by him, he has determined upon reprinting the Pamphlet precisely in its original shape.

The Second Reading of Lord Radnor's Bill, which was to have taken place this evening, is now postponed to Monday, July 13.

Oxford, June 29, 1835.

My Lord Duke,

The House of Lords will shortly be called upon to discuss a subject, which, whatever may be thought of it elsewhere, the University of Oxford considers to be one of the most important which has ever been brought before the notice of Parliament. The importance which Oxford attaches to the question of Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles is sufficiently attested by the zeal, I may say the enthusiasm, with which the Members of Convocation, a short time since, pressed from all parts of the kingdom to declare their sentiments upon the subject. What those sentiments, in the great majority of instances, were, it is needless for me to remind your Grace. I will only say, that no matter of Academical legislation was ever, in the memory of the oldest Member of the University, more fully considered, more ably discussed, or decided by a more overwhelming majority.

It is natural, that the Members of the Oxford Convocation, after the large share of attention which they have bestowed upon this subject, and with the feeling that they have decided upon it to the best of their judgment, and upon the most con-

scientious grounds, should look with the greatest anxiety upon the prospect of its being reconsidered by others, who, whatever may be their political wisdom, and however sincere their desire of promoting the public good, are necessarily precluded, by the multiplicity of subjects to which they are required to give their attention, from bestowing upon any single question the same regard as those who are locally interested in it; and who must be prevented from bringing to the consideration of any subject connected with the Universities the benefit of that particular experience, of which no general prudence, and no rectitude of intention, can supply the place. And they cannot but feel positive alarm in contemplating the fact, that a measure, in which, both as Churchmen, and as Members of the University, they take so deep an interest, is about to be decided by those of whom many are acquainted only by report with the nature of the institutions of Oxford; and many more have no better personal knowledge of them to aid their decision, than that which they were enabled to form at a time when Oxford was not what it is, and when they, from youth and inexperience, were altogether incapable of appreciating its institutions.

With regard to the 'right' of Parliament to interfere in matters affecting the internal regulation of the University, I confess myself incompetent to give any positive opinion. A good deal, no doubt, depends upon what meaning we attach to the word

'right.' There is no written law on the subject, either on one side or the other. Precedents in favour of such interference there undoubtedly are; but they are drawn from a period of our history, which few would wish to see restored. According to one view of the subject, Right is defined by Might; and, of course, no one denies that, in this sense, Parliament has a right to do with the University what it will. But, if by 'right' be understood, equitable claim, reasonable pretence; and, still more, if into the notion we allow to enter, (as surely, in the present case, we must,) not merely abstract propriety, but general expediency, (I use the word not in its popular, but in its true, sense,) then I think we must allow, that the Universities have a 'right' to legislate for themselves.

I grant, however, that the word is ambiguous, and I do not desire to press it beyond its just meaning. But, if not against the strict 'right' of Parliament to interfere with our internal regulations, yet at least against the propriety, the expediency, the wisdom, of such interference, I would respectfully, but decidedly, protest. I do unhesitatingly maintain, that, although, in the strict meaning of the word, *constitutional*, such an interference is yet an extreme and impolitic exercise of power.

My object, however, in presuming to address your Grace, is not so much to argue against the propriety, or expediency, of extrinsic legislation in matters affecting our internal discipline, as to state

to you the reasons, which, after some experience, and much consideration, have induced me, although not originally disinclined to some change in our system of requiring Subscription to the Articles, to feel strongly against the principle of the present measure. And I am the more disposed to confine myself chiefly to objections against the measure itself, because, in the petition which has been adopted by the University on the subject of Lord Radnor's Bill, the inexpediency of legislative interference is the topic to which it has been deemed most proper to allude. The very recent decision, however, of Convocation on the question of Subscription to the Articles, is a sufficient proof that this is not the only ground upon which the vast majority of the University objects to the measure now before Parliament. For it is sufficiently well known, that the decision of the 20th of last May was made against a measure far less subversive of our present system than Lord Radnor's Bill. The proposition, on that occasion, was merely to exchange Subscription to the Articles at Matriculation for a Declaration, designed by the framers of it to be no less exclusive of Dissenters than Subscription itself; whereas, it is proposed by Lord Radnor's measure to abolish Subscription without any substitute, and that, not only at Matriculation, but likewise at the time of the first Degree.

The question of Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles at Matriculation is, I am well aware, not to be hastily confounded with that of the admission

of Dissenters to a residence, even as Undergraduates, amongst us. It would, of course, be possible for the University, after the abolishing of the present test, to frame another which should be equally, and even more, exclusive, than Subscription to the Articles; though when Parliamentary interference had once taken place, it would again, no doubt, and probably in a short time, be exercised to abolish any substitute for Subscription to the Articles upon which we might resolve. It would seem, I allow, to be implied by the preamble to Lord Radnor's Bill, that the admission of Dissenters to the University is not the immediate object which his Lordship has in view, in proposing a measure for the abolition of Subscription to the Articles. That the present measure, however, would from many persons receive support, not on account of its professed object, but as a step to something farther, we may, I think, reasonably presume; and it is for your Grace to determine, how far this fact is, or is not, an objection to supporting it at all. That its obvious tendency too, though not its declared purpose, is to provide for the admission of Dissenters to the University of Oxford, I shall attempt presently to shew. Still, I am content, in the first instance, to view the measure with reference to the grounds of it stated in the preamble of the Bill; namely, as a provision against the unreasonableness, and possibly dangerous consequences, of requiring Subscription from persons of tender age, who are unable to give

entire and implicit assent to the Articles of faith, which they are called upon to subscribe.

The "tender age" of which the preamble speaks, is implied, by what follows, to mean every age short of twenty-three. Even at the time of taking the Degree of B.A. after having attended, by the necessary arrangements of every College in the University, a course of Lectures on the Thirty-nine Articles, and been minutely examined in the contents of them for his Degree, the young man is still, according to this Bill, regarded as incompetent, from his youth, to subscribe them. With one exception, however; viz. in case *the founder of any endowment* (Academical endowments being of course included) *shall have required Subscription to the Articles as a necessary condition of participating in the benefits of his foundation.* What, then? is the objection above stated, in such a case as this, to give way? For aught Lord Radnor knows, there may be Colleges in Oxford, in which signature to the Thirty-nine Articles may be required by the founder as the condition of being elected to a Scholarship, or Undergraduate Fellowship. Now, there are undoubtedly many Colleges in Oxford, in which boys of sixteen are admissible on the Foundation. Therefore, *when pecuniary benefit is at stake*, all the objections against early Subscription before stated (objections, which, if they are worth any thing, are paramount) are to give way. But, if no such pecuniary benefit be at stake, Statutes, Aca-

demical or Collegiate, which now require Subscription to the Articles as a preliminary to Matriculation, and to the first Degree, are to be wholly disregarded. It is impossible not to apprehend, from the discovery of an inconsistency so palpable as this, that other objects are contemplated by the framers of the Bill than the removal of conscientious scruples to early Subscription.

But I confess myself to differ altogether from the opinion, frequently maintained even by good and wise men, and implied in the preamble of Lord Radnor's Bill, that young men, at the age of those who come to the University, and even afterwards, are unable to assent to the Articles upon a sufficient understanding of their contents. I am fully satisfied, and I speak after some experience, that young men, not only of twenty-one, (the age at which they ordinarily take the Degree of B.A.) but even of eighteen, (the age at which they ordinarily come to the University,) are fully competent to understand enough of the Thirty-nine Articles, to enable them to sign them from personal understanding of their contents.

As the mere opinion of an individual unknown to you, such a declaration would rightly be considered by your Grace as worthless; as the result of some experience as a College Tutor, it will be deemed by you of more importance. In the College to which I have the honour to belong, it has been, for a long time past, the practice, to examine the

Candidates for entrance in the history of the Bible, and in the leading doctrines of the Church of England, as contained in the Catechism. To these subjects of examination we have, within the last few months, added another in the Thirty-nine Articles, with a view to the Subscription to be made at Matriculation. We have found, that, even without previous knowledge of any such intention on our parts, the Candidates had, almost without exception, read and considered the Articles, and were able to give a satisfactory account of the leading doctrines contained in them. Were it to be generally understood, that such knowledge is thought desirable previously to the act of signature, I have no doubt that our system of requiring Subscription to the Articles at Matriculation would act most beneficially upon the preliminary education of the country. That the administration, indeed, of our system admits of improvement, I am not disposed to deny. Much might, I think, be done, by introducing a theological examination at entrance in the different Colleges, if not in the University. But this object, I believe, is more likely to be effected, if the present practice of requiring Subscription be retained, than if it were abolished. Nothing can, in my opinion, be more desirable, than that young men should be induced to turn their attention to the leading subjects involved in the Articles of the Church of England before coming to the University.

I repeat then, that I believe such a bonâ fide assent to be perfectly possible, even at Matriculation; it would be enough for me, in arguing against Lord Radnor's Bill, to prove it possible at the age of twenty-one. I can only say, that I have frequently met with young men in my own College, who, before taking their first Degree, have understood the Articles of the Church of England as well as any Clergyman need understand them, and far better than many actually do; and that I never yet met with one who might not, if he pleased, know as much of them upon taking his Bachelor's Degree, as upon entering the Ministry.

The Thirty-nine Articles are constantly spoken of as a formulary of faith far more difficult to comprehend than the Catechism, which much younger persons than those who come to the University are expected to understand in such measure as to assent to the doctrines contained in it. Surely this is a mistake. In one sense the Catechism is as difficult as the Articles, and in another the Articles are even easier than the Catechism. Doctrines they both involve, to human reason mysterious, and even by the oldest, and the best instructed, to be received altogether upon the authority of Holy Scripture. One mystery is as difficult to understand as another, and the very elements of our religion are full of mystery. But, in respect of being fuller and more explicit than the Catechism, the Articles are less difficult to be understood. I mean,

that it is less difficult to collect from them what the doctrines of the Church are; the difficulties arising out of the nature of those doctrines remaining in both cases the same. All which is necessary, with regard either to the Catechism or the Articles, is, that the young person should be able to prove the doctrines contained in them from Holy Scripture; and, if we expect this in our Charity Schools, I do not see why we should expect less in our Universities[b].

[b] Whatever may be the opinion of persons in the present day upon the competency of young men to understand the subjects of the Thirty-nine Articles, there is no doubt that, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, when the Subscription at Matriculation was first imposed, persons of much earlier age than that at which young men now ordinarily come to the Universities, were required to be instructed in theological works, no less doctrinal, and even controversial, than the Thirty-nine Articles themselves. Dean Nowell states his object in putting forth his greater Catechism (drawn up by order of Convocation in 1562, though not published for some years afterwards) to be "ut Latinitatem pariter atque pietatem uno eodemque labore *pueri* nostri addiscere possint." See the Preface to Nowell's Catechism in the Enchiridion Theologicum, published at Oxford, and compare with it Strype's Annals, vol. i. part 1. p. 522. (Oxford edition, 1824.) It appears, likewise, to have been the intention of Abp. Parker, to put forth, with the sanction of Convocation, a compilation of theological documents, consisting of Nowell's Catechism, the Articles, and Jewel's Apology "for the youth in the Universities and *Grammar Schools* throughout the realm." (Strype's Annals, vol. i. part 1. p. 474.) It is by no means, therefore, to be supposed that the University of Oxford, in requiring, by her Statutes, Subscription to the Articles even from boys of twelve years of age, contemplated, of necessity, a mere act of ignorant deference to the authority of the Church; since

As to " minute and careful examination" of the contents of the Articles, without which it is stated, in the preamble of Lord Radnor's Bill, that Subscription to them ought not to be required, I confess that, while I think it might be, in every case, desirable, I do not hold it to be necessary as a preliminary requisite to Subscription in the case of a young man at his Matriculation. He is either a member of the Church of England, or he is not. If he be, it may surely be expected of him, that he should allow the authority of the Church, in which he has been educated, (represented to him as it is, in his parents, in his previous instructors, in the

we find that, in the days in which the Matriculation Statute was framed, the youth of England were expected to have some knowledge of the doctrines contained in the Articles, at the same time that they learned the Latin Grammar. Our Church, of course, did not suppose that boys of twelve could be judges in doctrines of so high and difficult a character as those contained in the Articles; she did not undoubtedly think them fit to decide, on their own private judgments, on the Scriptural nature of the truths which she set forth; but, on the other hand, it appears, that, although competent to enforce, on her own authority, an assent to the Thirty-nine Articles without understanding, or even knowledge, of their contents on the part of the Subscribers, she yet, in her wisdom, thought it advisable to provide for something higher than a mere act of ignorant submission. By fixing the age at twelve, she would seem to intimate that she regarded alike the intelligence of the subscribing parties, and their submission to authority: had she regarded submission only, she would not have specified an age, below which she deemed Subscription to be improper on the part of her students; had she regarded intelligence only, she would probably have fixed a later time for the act of Subscription.

University, among whose members he is about to be enrolled,) to supply his lack of minute personal acquaintance with the subjects involved in the Articles. If he have been educated in a different Church, (that of Scotland, for instance, many members of which enter the University of Oxford,) it is to be expected of him (and an expectation it is, which, in most cases, I have reason to believe, will not be disappointed) that he shall have made himself acquainted with the Articles of the Church of England, or, at least, that his parents, knowing that he will have to sign them on entering the University of Oxford, shall have explained to him the difference between the doctrines of the Church whose Articles he is about to sign, and that in which he has been brought up. In the instances of persons entering the University who have been brought up as Presbyterians, which have come under my notice, I have invariably found this to be the case. And, when the views of our University in requiring Subscription at Matriculation shall (as, after the late discussions we may reasonably expect that they will) be more fully understood, than in some detached instances they have, through our own neglect or that of others, hitherto been, we may trust that in every case such previous knowledge of the subject will be found to exist.

Anxiously desiring, therefore, as I do, that young men, before coming to the University, should gain a knowledge of the contents of the Articles, and

be able to prove the main doctrines contained in them, as they are taught to prove those of their Catechism, by reference to Holy Scripture, I am by no means prepared to say, that I consider this personal knowledge in every case an essential preliminary to admission. I think that the Articles may be rightly and conscientiously signed by persons possessing various degrees of acquaintance with their contents: and even by those who know no more of them than that they contain the well considered and generally acknowledged doctrines of the Church of which they are members. It is not as if such a deference to authority could ever, even at a much later period, yield altogether to personal understanding of the subjects of the Articles. It does not, and it cannot, do so. It enters, to a certain degree, into the Subscription before Ordination. In the case of very young persons, it is the sole ground of belief in matters of small, as well as of great, importance. As knowledge increases, and capacity opens, it mingles with personal understanding, or experience, of subjects, in forming the proper ground of assent. A certain degree of it remains to the latest period of our lives, and is in fact essentially wrought up with the texture of our minds. It is a spirit which haunts us, turn where we will, and protest against it as we may. We cannot dismiss it from our minds, if we would, and ought not, if we could. Of the faith of thousands who have no leisure, or no capacity, for enquiry into speculative truths,

it is the sole, yet perfectly sufficient, basis. And as I should say that it is very desirable even for a poor man to have a minute acquaintance with the grounds by which the doctrines of the Church to which he belongs are supported, while I believe that he may possess a saving faith upon the authority of others, and without such minute personal knowledge; in the same way I think that a young man may believe in the Articles upon the authority of the Church so as to justify him in signing them, while yet it is in the highest degree desirable, that he should, at the earliest period at which he is capable of understanding them, study them for himself.

I am well aware, that this is a ground of argument not likely to be generally understood or appreciated. There is a great, and I almost fear an irreconcilable, difference of sentiment on this subject between different persons, and different parties, in this country at present. Many say, that nothing is to be believed in religion, which is not understood; while others (with whom I agree) maintain, that, upon religious subjects, we must believe a great deal more than we can perfectly understand. The refusal to recognize authority as a guide in matters of Faith is not, indeed, to be confounded with that rejection of every thing mysterious in religion, which is the great principle of Socinianism. But I cannot help thinking, that somewhat of the same state of mind is implied by both. I do not say that the authority of any particular Church

is to be ranked with that of Holy Scripture. Far otherwise. But only, that those views of Scriptural truth, in which the wisest and best men of every age, using prayer to God for the enlightening of their minds, and all other proper helps to knowledge of divine things, have agreed in maintaining, are of far greater authority than any ordinary person's private interpretation of the word of God. This I take to be the middle way of the Church of England, equally removed from Popery, (which attributes infallibility to the decrees and councils of its own Church,) and from that ultra Protestantism, which makes each man's reason, unaided by prayer, and uninfluenced by the opinion of the Catholic (that is the universal) Church in every age and country, (for such has always, notwithstanding the corruption of particular Churches, existed) the rule of his faith.

But I am digressing into a wide field. I only seek to direct your Grace's attention, as briefly as possible, to the *principle* upon which Subscription to the Articles at Matriculation is mainly grounded. The denial of that principle is, I believe, at the root of many of those opinions upon Ecclesiastical subjects, which are abroad in the present day; and of those connected with the University among the number. I know that there are many who disclaim (and I believe sincerely disclaim) a wish to impugn this principle of submission of the judgment to authority in their desire of bringing about changes in our Academical system. But I

cannot help thinking, that it may lurk where its existence is unsuspected.

But, My Lord Duke, let me ask, whether principles of the nature of that to which I have here adverted, be not, whether right or wrong, entitled to the most serious and careful consideration, on the part of those who approach to the discussion of a subject like that which is about to be brought before the House of Lords? It must be quite obvious, that a measure for the abolition of a law which, almost coeval with the Reformation in its origin[c], has worked well for 250 years; which has twice been submitted to the consideration of the University, and twice, after the maturest reflection, been sanctioned by the decision of Convocation; which, on a late occasion especially, was ratified by that body, in spite of every thing by

[c] In the age of Queen Elizabeth, A. D. 1581. A curious specimen of the danger of approaching a subject like this without sufficient historical knowledge, is given in the course of the discussion which took place in Parliament upon the same question in 1772, (for which see Extracts from a Collection of Papers published in Oxford in that year, on the subject of Subscription, and lately edited in Oxford.) It appears that an Honourable Member of the House of Commons, whose name has been lost, declaimed against the Articles, *as a Calvinistic device of Laud, and a relic of monkish spirituality*. Now, when the Articles were published, Laud was not born; and when Subscription at Matriculation was first imposed upon Members of the University of Oxford, he was just eight years old; he was a strong opponent of Calvinism in every form; and, assuredly, "monkish spirituality" is the last thing we should expect to find in Articles framed against Popery.

which men of little conscience, or little reflection, were likely to have been actuated, and which were of a nature to influence even the thinking and conscientious; public opinion; the probable agitation of the question in Parliament; the known or suspected sentiments of those high in the political world, and among others, of the Chancellor of the University himself; it must be obvious, I say, that an institution like this is not to be lightly thought of, or hastily assailed.

I have hitherto considered this subject chiefly with reference to the principle laid down in the preamble of Lord Radnor's Bill; that, namely, of the unreasonableness and danger of requiring Subscription to Articles of Faith from young men, and those who have not minutely and carefully examined them. I will now speak briefly of what I conceive will be the ulterior consequences of the measure, whether contemplated, or not, by the framers and supporters of it.

It is provided by the Bill, that, from the time of its passing, no person shall be required by any person or persons in authority, in the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, either to subscribe the Articles, or to *declare his assent* to them. Thus, therefore, not merely Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, but even any such Declaration as that lately proposed to Convocation by the Heads of Houses, will be rendered illegal. But it will, of course, be perfectly competent to the University to

frame any Declaration, as a test, both at the time of Matriculation, and of the first Degree, by which the terms of the Bill, should it pass into a law, will not be contravened. It is easy to imagine several Declarations which might be framed without violating the condition of the Bill; some of them less, and some of them *more*, exclusive of Dissenters, than the present test of Subscription. It is not unreasonable to conjecture, that the difference would turn on the side of greater exclusiveness; a difference of which many, however they might allow it as an *alternative*, would greatly lament the necessity. For there are many, who consider the practical operation of the present system in admitting some Dissenters amongst us, (Presbyterians of the Church of Scotland, for instance, and a few others,) as one of its greatest advantages. We do not at present invite Dissenters; but we do not object to receive any who, on whatever grounds satisfactory to their own consciences, are content to subscribe the Articles of the Church of England.

But some, perhaps, may place their reliance upon the supposed opinion of the present Board of Heads of Houses. Even, however, if that opinion were, (as there is reason to believe that it is not,) in the majority of instances, favourable to the admission of Dissenters in greater numbers than, according to the present system, is possible, it must be recollected, that the Board is not unchangeable. It is necessarily altered in some measure every year, by

the change of Proctors; very few of the present Members of that Board were members of it twenty years ago; the ordinary course of human life (to say nothing of high offices in the Church, by promotion to which the Heads of Houses are liable, at any time, to be withdrawn from the University) may produce an entire change in the sentiments of the majority of that body at no very distant period.

But, upon what Oxford may or may not do, those who are called upon to decide with reference to the present Bill have no right to speculate. They are to look only to that Bill, *as it is in itself*. Our future proceedings are contingent; the terms of the Bill are plain and specific. And, according to those terms, the University of Oxford is thrown open to Dissenters of every denomination; not to those only, whose principles, however in some respects erroneous, may be as consistent with true piety as our own, but to those also, whose tenets I believe to be utterly irreconcilable with spiritual and Evangelical religion. The only exception is in the case of persons about to receive votes in Convocation, and of those admitted to Fellowships and Scholarships, where Subscription to the Articles is required by the Founder as a special qualification for participating in the benefits of the foundation. Now the fact is, that in no College, as far as I am aware, is such a condition required. The Statutes of Colleges were framed either in Roman Catholic

times, when no test was deemed necessary, because no visible difference of opinion existed ; or since the Reformation, when the provision made by the Statutes of the University for the exclusion of Dissenters has superseded the necessity of any similar provision in the separate Colleges. If, then, this clause in the Bill be designed to exclude Dissenters from the foundation of our Colleges, it will be found, in practice, wholly ineffectual towards such an end. The only security against the election of Dissenters to Fellowships will be in the feeling of the electors for the time being ; a security, I need not say how insufficient. It is one great excellence of our present system, that it leaves as little as possible, in matters essential, to the discretion of those who are required to administer it. The Statutes of the University act upon the system. Thus, lectures in the several Colleges on the Thirty-nine Articles, and an examination in those Articles at the first Degree, are rendered indispensable by the act of Subscription required at the beginning and end of the career of every Undergraduate. For these most wholesome practices, as well as for others, in our system, the Bill of Lord Radnor will leave us no better guarantee than the fickleness of individual opinion.

The fact is, that Lord Radnor's Bill indicates, as might be expected, a want of acquaintance with the constitution, and actual state, of the University of Oxford. This is the fundamental objection against

all legislation for us out of our own body. The power of legislating effectually for the good of the University, necessarily involves a large share of local knowledge; not merely a knowledge of the Statutes of particular Colleges, as well as of the University in general, but such an acquaintance also as experience alone can give, with the actual working of the present system. Nothing can be more unjust and untrue, than to say that our attachment to the present system of the University, in its essential features, is the result of a mere bigotted and thoughtless acquiescence in things as they are. It is far oftener a conscientious conviction, arising from observation of the actual effect of the present system, that our ancestors were wiser in these matters than many of ourselves. I am not insensible to many and grievous deficiencies in our mode of administering our system; nor surprised that this our neglect should have brought obloquy upon our institutions on the part of those little capable of estimating their real value. But the improvement which has taken place in every essential respect in the University of Oxford, during the last thirty years, is such, as to afford the most cheering prospect for the future; while yet it is most true, that far more remains to be done than has yet been accomplished. I am far from lamenting the ordeal of examination and enquiry to which our system has of late been submitted. I am satisfied, that in many minds the farthest removed from

bigotry, the result of those enquiries has been to cause an approbation, upon the highest principles, of institutions in which they before acquiesced out of mere custom, and the prejudices (far from being always blameable) of education and habit; while I have no doubt that the effect of this scrutiny has likewise been in many instances productive of improvement in the administration of the existing system.

Only suffer us (I would say most humbly to your Grace and to the Parliament) to prosecute these enquiries, and to effect these improvements, among ourselves. There is really no want of candour, and desire of improvement, among us. The University of Oxford is not, as it is often supposed to be, a body distinct in character and feeling from all others. The elements which enter into the constitution of other bodies are mixed up, nearly in the same proportion, here as elsewhere. I do not believe that, as a body, we are deficient in any of those qualities which are essential to good deliberation; while I am sure that our responsibilities, as Clergymen and Members of a Christian University, in addition to those which we share with all other Christians, ought to make us, and I believe in great measure actually do make us, examine subjects, with reference to those only good and true principles, which politicians, of whatever party in the State, are too apt to sink in imaginary or insufficient notions of expediency; and I hope we are

making progress towards the time in which these principles will actuate us altogether.

In conclusion, let me respectfully remind your Grace, that in elevating you to an office, which has been pronounced, on a late public occasion, the "most distinguished of the many distinguished honours which have been conferred upon you[d]," this University was actuated by the sincere belief, that your Grace would have the will, as all knew you from your great talents and great Parliamentary influence to have the ability, to maintain unimpaired our rights and privileges, and to preserve inviolate that connexion between the University and the Church of England which is alike beneficial to both. Let me, in the name (as I think, after the manifestation of feeling which has been made, I am justified in saying) of the whole University, implore your Grace to use your influence against the interference of the Legislature with those matters of internal arrangement, on which, from our long professional experience in education, from our clerical character, and from our habitual modes of thinking, we consider ourselves best qualified to decide. I beg also to remind your Grace once more, that from internal evidence in the provisions of this Bill, by which tenderness of conscience is allowed for only where pecuniary interest is not at stake, it is to be apprehended, that the fair words which grace

[d] Speech of Lord Mahon at the Pitt dinner.

the preamble are not advanced so much for the maintenance of a principle, as for the purpose of promoting ulterior objects, less likely to be acceptable to those among whom the measure is proposed. Supported then by that overwhelming majority of Members of Convocation, non-resident as well as resident, who last summer raised their voice against the admission of Dissenters, and the consequent ruin of our religious system of education, I call upon you to protest against a measure, which is only the more to be suspected, because it seems to endeavour after compassing its end by indirect means. And, supported by that meeting of Convocation, which, composed of our advocates collected from far and near, did, scarce a month ago, by a majority of eight to one[e], reject the proposition for substituting a Declaration in the place of Subscription, I call upon you not rashly to give the countenance of your great name to a measure for sweeping away that institution, with respect to which the University has so recently and so loudly proclaimed, that, after mature consideration, it knows of no better means of excluding those whom it holds dangerous to admit among its members, as well as of directing the attention of the youth of this kingdom, not only while under its immediate charge, but during all their preparation for an Academic course, to those great doctrines of Religion

[e] 459 to 57.

which have been sanctioned by the wisest and best of our Church and nation, and with which it conceives that the highest interests of this country must stand or fall.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord Duke,

&c. &c.

Oxford, June 24, 1835.

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